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NOTES OF THE WEEK

We agree with the Prime Minister that "the ex-Kaiser is not worth any more bloodshed." But he can hardly be serious in asserting that the Allied Powers could only force Holland to surrender William of Hohenzollern by bloodshed. If England, France, Italy, Belgium, Japan and America, were to demand the surrender of the ex-Kaiser, the Dutch Government could only make a show of resistance, to save their face. They, the Dutch Ministers, might ask for a formal ultimatum, or even for a blockade of a day or two, in order to be able to say that they yielded to *force majeure*. But to tell us that Dutch soldiers would be asked to fight for the ex-Kaiser's asylum is absurd. For some reason, which the public are not allowed to know, the idea of trying the Kaiser has been abandoned by the Allied Powers. Probably their lawyers advised them that sufficient evidence was unobtainable. The Prime Minister's haughty repudiation of Colonel Claude Lowther and the hang-the-Kaiser candidates at the General Election is a supreme stroke of effrontery. Put not your trust in Premiers.

In supporting the clause in the new Home Rule Bill for the repeal of the Act of 1914, Mr. Lloyd George made some astounding admissions. Be it remembered that the Home Rule Act of 1914 was forced into law by the operation of the Parliament Act, *i.e.*, without the assent of the House of Lords, by a Government in which Mr. Lloyd George was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and next to Mr. Asquith its most powerful member. This is what Mr. Lloyd George now says of the Act, for the sake of which he abrogated the Constitutional function of the House of Lords and brought Ireland to the verge of civil war. "It is true that in 1914 it" (*i.e.*, the Home Rule Act) "was acceptable to those who represented Ireland at the time, but *if it had been brought into operation, Nationalist Ireland would have treated it with contempt and scorn in time.*" The italics are ours, and are meant to under-

line this remarkable criticism by Mr. Lloyd George of the conduct of Mr. Asquith's Government in 1914, to which must be added the following damnatory sentence. "*Under the Act of 1914, Ireland would be bankrupt at the present moment. It was an absolutely unworkable Act of Parliament and would have to be recast financially before it would ever work.*" And it was for this that the House of Lords was threatened with the creation of 500 peers!

In his anxiety to discredit the Home Rule Act of 1914, of which he was one of the principal authors, Mr. Lloyd George did not do justice to Mr. Asquith's Government. "As to pledges, Mr. Asquith gave a pledge that under no condition would he assent to anything that would involve the coercion of Ulster. Was that not a pledge which must also be respected? It was a pledge which would have been inconsistent with the enforcement of the Act of 1914." But Mr. Lloyd George forgets that before the Buckingham Palace Conference, and the outbreak of war, his Government introduced an amending Bill in the House of Lords to exempt Ulster from the operation of the Home Rule Act. The Premier's speech is very disquieting. For if the Asquith Government, in which Mr. Lloyd George was Chancellor of the Exchequer, forced a Home Rule Bill three times through the House of Commons, and crippled the House of Lords to ensure its passing, and we are now told that this Bill was unworkable, would have reduced Ireland to bankruptcy, and would in time have been treated with contempt and scorn—what are we to think of the present Bill?

The difference between the 1914 Bill and the 1920 Bill is all in favour of the 1914 Bill. The 1914 Bill was accepted by the recognised leaders of Irish Nationalists. The 1920 Bill is not so accepted: they refuse even to discuss it, and "treat it with scorn and contempt." Sir Edward Carson, the leader of the Ulsterites, does not pretend to think it workable, but says he will give it a trial, and will do nothing to prevent its passing.



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Therefore the 1920 Bill starts under much worse auspices than the 1914 Act. The Prime Minister says, "O, but the Irish are in an inflammable condition of mind. When they come to their senses, they will see that ours is a very nice Bill." This is not very convincing to those who have followed Irish history during the last forty years. When have the Irish Nationalists ever been in anything but an "inflammable condition of mind," except perhaps during Lord Salisbury's twenty years of resolute government? Mr. Lloyd George exhorts us not to be "niggardly and parsimonious," and to treat Ireland generously. That is just what we have been doing for the last hundred years.

We agree with nearly every word of Lord Rothermere's warning in the *Sunday Pictorial* on the subject of our financial position. But it is grossly unfair to throw the whole blame on Mr. Austen Chamberlain. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer refuses to listen to the views of the Chambers of Commerce, he is abused for relying on Treasury and Inland Revenue officials. If he gives way to the demands of the Chambers of Commerce, he is accused of vacillation and weakness. Finance depends upon policy; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer is merely the instrument of the Cabinet; he has to find the money to finance the policy of the Cabinet. It is easy to abuse Mr. Chamberlain for continuing the Excess Profits Duty at an enhanced rate; but none of his critics has suggested anything to put in its place.

The real person to blame is the Prime Minister, who appears to have been bamboozled by France and Italy into accepting a mandate or mission for the regeneration of Mesopotamia, one of the most disturbed and unruly portions of the world's surface. A mandate to govern Mesopotamia! Why, we can't govern Ireland! It would really have been a good joke if Japan, who is one of the Allied Powers, had proposed to confer a mandate on America to govern Ireland. The chaos and anarchy in Ireland are quite as bad as anything at Mosul or Bagdad. Of course, France and Italy are delighted at our undertaking to police, or rather to reconstruct, Mesopotamia: it will make their acquisitions in Syria and Anatolia so much safer. But then France and Italy are not spending a sixpence or risking the bones of a single Frenchman or Italian on the reconstruction of Mesopotamia.

We are reminded of the services to civilisation rendered by Britain in Egypt. It is true that we have transformed Egypt: but it has taken twenty years of patient work, and more than once brought us to the verge of war with France. Are we now in a position to embark on a similar task in Mesopotamia? Our national debt is over 8,000 millions, and our Budget exceeds 1,000 millions. The income-tax ranges from 6s. to 10s. in the pound with super-tax; in addition to which there are excess profits duty, the corporation tax, and death duties. Besides this crushing load of imperial taxation, local rates are rising to a figure not far short in many places of 20s. in the pound. There are limits beyond which taxation cannot go, and we are rapidly approaching them. Is this a time in which to accept a mandate, or a mission, which will involve us in heavy expenditure and possibly loss of life for the next twenty years?

Let us, first and foremost, restore order in Ireland, before we indulge in pompous perorations about our duty to Mesopotamia. The first duty of Government is to protect the lives and property of our fellow-citizens in Ireland, and to bring to punishment the murderers of policemen, and the rebels who are levying war against the King. Parts of Ireland are as much under a reign of terror and brigandage as many parts of Soviet Russia. When we have shown the world that we can govern Ireland decently, we may begin to think of the Arabs, but not before. Nor is the Mesopotamian

adventure the only mess we have got into. We have sent the Greeks in to enforce the terms of the treaty on Turkey. We have conferred "a mandate" on Greece; and though Britain is left alone to finance her mandate in Mesopotamia, presumably we shall have to finance Greece's mandate to appropriate Turkey's provinces. The Greeks and the Turks are enemies of centuries; and a war between them may be indefinitely prolonged. Where are these mandates going to land us?

As if we hadn't enough subsidies to provide, lo! here is another whacking subsidy of £250,000, divided into two annual payments, for the development of civil aviation. The ablest man who has ever been connected with the Air Force is unquestionably Sir Hugh Trenchard. He is dead against the proposed subsidy to civil aviation on the inextinguishable ground that all State subsidies to commercial enterprise are bad; that civil aviation has not yet had time to prove its value; and that once a Government subsidy has been granted, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to withdraw it. It may be very nice to fly to Paris, or to be able to send letters and parcels by air. But it is at present a purely commercial speculation, and of a very risky kind. Why should public money be involved in supporting certain manufacturing firms? "No present urgency exists," writes Sir Hugh Trenchard in his Minority Report, "to help civil aviation in order to provide a reserve for Imperial Defence. Service aviation should be built up for the present on a policing basis, provision for war expansion being added later."

Of course, these wise words of Sir Hugh Trenchard will be ignored, because the governors of Britain have gone mad in their desire to spend public money. Nothing will stop them but the discovery that the Government can borrow no more money. It is an open secret that the Housing Bonds campaign has been a failure. The Government of India are uneasy about the coming winter, as there is talk of a Bolshevik movement in Afghanistan, which might lead to a frontier war. What do we suggest ought to be done to reduce this insane expenditure? In Mesopotamia we ought to go slowly and tentatively, as Mr. Ormsby Gore and Lord Winterton suggest, and try to come to terms with some of the Arab chiefs. A little money and a good manner go a long way in those parts of the world. Our Indian officials and our troops ought to be withdrawn, except a few battalions. Arrangements should be made with the great oil companies to sink wells, paying royalties to the Imperial Government and the chiefs.

At home all subsidies should be stopped. Mr. Fisher's Education Act should be postponed for at least five years, until we see our way more clearly. If Ireland gets Home Rule, England should at once stop paying Irish old-age pensions. The Labour Exchanges, now that they have served their purpose of measuring unemployment, should be abolished. For ourselves, we should be in favour of selling our West Indian possessions to the United States in satisfaction of our debt, which we believe is about 1,000 millions. It would, of course, be necessary to retain a coaling-station and a repairing base for the Navy. The coloured and white residents in the West Indies would be just as well off under the United States as under Britain—they might even gain commercial advantage—unless we are misinformed the Americans have already acquired considerable business interests in Jamaica.

Monstrous! Unpatriotic! Brightest jewel in the British Crown! we can hear the journalists exclaim. Sentimentally, no doubt, it is extremely unpleasant to part with any of the national possessions: it is a blow to our national pride. But people who are in debt, nations as well as individuals, must submit to humiliations. We don't suppose that the Duke of Devonshire liked selling his historic mansion, or that the peers and country gentlemen who are selling their family estates and houses as fast as they can are happy about it. If

the Americans will give us 1,000 millions for the islands, let the bargain go through. It would be an immense relief to our finances. And as a *solatium* to our wounded feelings let us remember that we have added to the British Crown the German Colonies in East and West Africa, in the Cameroons, sundry islands in the Pacific, Palestine, Arabia, Egypt and Mesopotamia. Is not this enough?

The daily, evening, weekly, and monthly press preaches economy with commendable vigour and monotony. Every now and again a Cabinet Minister condescends to join the chorus, and a persistent plaint rises from the City. But what is *done*, not said, in the House of Commons? Hardly a day passes but the Government proposes a measure involving an additional expenditure of millions. Let us take Tuesday as a sample. Mr. Bridgeman brought in a Bill to authorise the Government advancing twenty-six millions a year to foreign buyers of British goods. After a perfunctory opposition, the Bill was read a second time without a division. Then Sir Laming Worthington Evans proposed to raise Civil, Naval and Military pre-war pensions by one and three-quarter millions a year. Sir Frederick Banbury, who sits for the City, was the only member who protested. The following members demanded an increase of the amount: Messrs. Cooke, Mills, Remnant, Hogge, Butcher, Gray, Nall, Mitchell, Allen, C. White, Bowyer.

It will thus be seen that in one evening 27½ millions were added to our expenditure, an amount which is six or seven millions more than the total charge for the National Debt before the war. All the members who spoke loudly complained that the Government was not giving enough, and clamoured for more generous treatment. One of the foremost claimants for more was Sir Clement Kinloch-Cooke, the member for a dockyard constituency. On grounds of bare equity there is no answer to the claim of pre-war pensioners for an increase. The answer is one of necessity: where is the money to come from? Where is this system of outdoor relief at the expense of a small section of the community to stop?

"The lavish Government can give no more;
Yet we repine, and plenty makes us poor."

Lord D'Abernon, well-known for many years as Sir Edgar Vincent, has been appointed Ambassador at Berlin. He is a man of great ability and knowledge, a good linguist, speaking French as few Englishmen speak it; and very tactful in his dealings with foreigners. His knowledge of finance was acquired as governor of the Imperial Ottoman Bank at Constantinople, and also as Financial Adviser to the Khedive of Egypt. He was at the head of the Ottoman Bank from 1889 to 1897, during the great boom in South African mines. He certainly made a great deal of money, and he was accused of acting as agent for Barnato Brothers, though probably he merely bought and sold shares, as he was entitled to do. All that is ancient history. Lord D'Abernon has kept his money, and improved his brains by a study of English politics and racing. No better selection for the post of Berlin Ambassador could have been made.

As French and Italian papers sometimes assert that the sacrifices of Britain and America in the war are not comparable to their own, it is instructive to read the increase of taxation per head in the various countries between 1914 and 1920. In the United Kingdom the taxation per head in 1914 was £3 10s. 10d.; in 1920, £21 6s. 4d.; and estimated for 1921 at £22. In the United States the taxation per head in 1914 was \$6.79, and in 1920 it is estimated at \$49.41. In France the taxation per head in 1913 was fcs. 103.4, and in 1920 it is estimated at fcs. 450. In Italy the taxation per head in 1914 was (lire) 53.9, and in 1919 it was l. 134.3. In Germany it was in 1914 (marks) 31.3, and in 1921 it is estimated at 444.2. It will be seen that taxation has been multiplied by 7 in Britain, by 8 in America, by

4½ in France, by less than 3 in Italy, and by over 14 in Germany. The soil of Britain and America has not been invaded: but their pecuniary burthen is more than double that of their allies.

Have we any pretension to be considered a civilised country? While we are "gravely over-taxed" (in the words of Mr. McKenna) to subsidise, in figures running up to close on a hundred millions sterling, railway servants, and colliers, our hospitals are vainly sending out S.O.S. signals to save them from insolvency. We now learn that the Government of a country with a revenue of over 1,000 millions, cannot find the money to keep the fabric of Westminster Abbey in repair! That noblest of national temples, St. Paul's, Wren's masterpiece, is black with soot and dirt, presumably because the Office of Works can't pay the money to clean it by steam or scraper. If St. Paul's were kept as it ought to be, in its natural silver-grey coat, it would be one of the beauties of the metropolis. Yet the Prime Minister calls upon us to be "generous" to Sinn Feiners. We are not an artistic people.

The question of the revelation of professional secrets by doctors is connected with eugenics. When a doctor knows that a man or woman is afflicted with disease, venereal, hereditary, or incurable, what is he to do to prevent marriage? It seems a hard saying, but there can be nothing like a system of eugenics unless the seal of professional secrecy is removable in this sense, that the doctor should be allowed to inform the other party to the marriage. Even so, there is nothing to prevent the couple contracting marriage with full knowledge of the facts. The doctors, or some of them, have decided against the revelation of knowledge confidentially obtained, impelled doubtless by the feelings of gentlemen and also by a desire to retain their patients. The question for the legislature is, ought doctors to be compelled to denounce a patient, as in the case of infection? It is a very difficult problem.

An odious publicity is the badge of democracy, which is for ever prying into the private concerns of everybody. There are now five classes of people who are the recipients of their neighbours' secrets, doctors, lawyers, bankers, priests, and inland revenue clerks. Lawyers are the worst babblers, because the punitive consequences are more remote in their case, as they have two clients; and however they may give away the lay client, the solicitor-client will not desert them. As for the Inland Revenue officials, we are looking forward to the day when a list of super-taxers, with their incomes, will appear in some enterprising newspaper. How many men and women, commonly regarded as respectable, can safely be entrusted with a secret? It is a time-honoured maxim amongst diplomatists, that if you wish a piece of intelligence communicated to the chanceries of Europe, the best way is to repeat it to a colleague under the strict seal of confidence.

Between a Ministry of Mines, which is to fix wages, prices, the amount of export, the representation on boards, and Nationalisation, there seems to be a distinction without a difference. Sir Robert Horne tells us that there are 1,180,000 men employed in the coal-mining industry, and that their wage-bill amounts to £270,000,000, which is an average of more than £5 a week per head, a high figure, considering the number of boys and old men employed, and the short working week. The opposition of the miners' representatives to the Bill is one of sentiment, a question of the name. The Minister of Mines, who is to be subordinate to the President of the Board of Trade will, we fear, be as subject to political pressure as he would be under any scheme of Nationalisation. The attitude of the miners' members illustrates the fact that the industrial unrest is due to moral not economic causes. It is simply based on class jealousy, the envy excited by the sight of individual ownership.

THE "MESSPOT" MADNESS.

OPTIMISM, even when mendacious, is an excellent thing in a War Minister: in a Peace Minister, enveloped in financial difficulties, it is a very dangerous guide. Without any pedantic regard for truth, Mr. Lloyd George kept up our spirits during the War, for which we duly testified our gratitude in the election of 1918. But the flamboyant imperialism of the Prime Minister's speech in the Mesopotamian debate is an alarming sign that he fails to understand the financial position, or, what is more likely, that he has no real interest in economy. The enthusiasm with which the speech was received by the House of Commons and the division that followed, are even more alarming, because conclusive proofs that the guardians of the public purse are ignorant or indifferent to the necessity of cutting down expenditure, not by tens but by hundreds of millions. During the Boer war Lord Salisbury impressively warned the nation against the danger of overtaxing its strength. Lord Rothermere is right in saying that unless a drastic reduction in the votes is effected there will be, must be, some great financial catastrophe. A gentleman of wide financial experience in the City said to us the other day, "nobody has got any money." It was his picturesque way of saying that new issues, whether of Government loans, or industrial companies, could not be floated. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer discovers that his Treasury and Inland Revenue officials know nothing of the financial condition of the country, and that he can get no more money, there will be what is called on Continental bourses a "krach"!

The Prime Minister, with his buoyant rhetoric and smart debating scores, had little difficulty in "downing" Mr. Asquith with his prepared "practical man-of-figures" speech. But is not the whole transaction a glorious and costly muddle? Take the telegram that was read before the debate started, giving the British Government proclamation of 20th June. "His Majesty's Government having been entrusted with the mandate of Mesopotamia anticipate that the mandate will constitute Mesopotamia as independent State under guarantee of the League of Nations and subject to the mandate of Great Britain that it will lay on them" (on whom?) "the responsibility for the maintenance of internal peace and external security, and will require them to formulate an organic law framed in consultation with the people of Mesopotamia and with due regard to the rights, wishes, and interests of all the communities of the country. The mandate will contain provisions to facilitate developments of Mesopotamia as a self-governing State until such time as it can stand by itself, when the mandate will come to an end." The Prime Minister was at great pains to explain that the mandate came from the Allied Powers, and was issued at San Remo, and that the poor League of Nations will have no function but that of criticism, though the wording of the telegram is so confused that it reads as if the responsibility lay on the League of Nations. The meaning, however, is clear: the Allied Powers have given and Britain has accepted a mandate, or mission, to convert Mesopotamia, one of the most backward, barbarous, and disorderly districts in the Eastern hemisphere, in which Turks, Kurds, and Arabs all fight with one another, into a self-governing, peaceful, solvent, province with an elective legislature and an honest officialdom! Truly a giant's task! Why should we undertake it at this hour? It is no doubt very kind of the Allied Powers to confer this mandate upon Britain, especially as they are not going to contribute a single shilling or a single soldier to its execution. It is, of course, a great honour, and we cannot resist the suspicion that the Prime Ministers of France and Italy tickled the vanity of Mr. Lloyd George (once a Little Englander) by the use of that word "honour," which seems to excite him as it did Harry Hotspur. So England "may wear without co-rival all her dignities," i.e., the honours of policing the Near East, Mr. Lloyd George is quite willing to become responsible for an expenditure of some 40 millions a year. Clever M. Millerand, and astute Signor Orlando! They probably thought the surest way to

flatter the Radical Little Englander was to invest him with the imperial purple. They were right. Into the trap proudly strutted the Prime Minister and Parliament of Great Britain.

We are told that the moral, economic, and political rehabilitation of Mesopotamia is an obligation of honour! Why is it so? Because we have turned out the Turk? But we were at war with the Turk, as we were at war with Germany and Austria. We have ruined Germany and Austria, economically, morally and politically, quite as effectually as Turkey. There is chaos in Austria and Germany. Is Britain's duty, or obligation of honour, to govern Central Europe? When you conquer an enemy, you are not bound to occupy and govern his territory.

That the difficulties in front of us are enormous, and will involve us in increasing and protracted expenditure, there can be no doubt. The language of the mandate recalls our intervention in Egypt fifty years ago in conjunction with France. But Egypt was a flea-bite to Mesopotamia. The Egyptians are as docile and feeble a folk as the Arabs are strong and quarrelsome. At that time (in the seventies and eighties) our total national expenditure was £85,000,000, our debt was some £700,000,000 and the income-tax was as many pennies as it now is shillings in the pound. The Prime Minister and Mr. Churchill keep on assuring us that the troops and the expenditure will be speedily reduced: money is being asked to provide for six months. There are no grounds whatever for this optimism. Quite the contrary. Lord Curzon told the Lords that "every possible effort had been made to interest, consult, and galvanise into political activity the inhabitants of the country itself." Are we mad, to think that we can turn Mesopotamia into a Western Constitutional State, with a Parliament, and county councils, and a Whitehall bureaucracy? It would take a century.

Of course all this talk about a mandate, or a mission, and honourable obligation, is the conventional insincerity which discredits our foreign policy and is the curse of our public life. What we really want is a barrier, or buffer state, between Turks and Bolsheviks and India, keeping Persia as an outer court. If in carrying out this policy we help the Mesopotamians to govern themselves decently, to develop their resources, and to keep their enemies at bay, so much the better. But don't let us maintain 100,000 troops in the country, and a band of Indian officials, at a cost of £40,000,000, or £50,000,000 a year. Let the Government follow the wise counsel contained in the admirable speeches of Mr. Ormsby Gore, Lord Winterton, and Mr. Aubrey Herbert, who have all been in the East. Let us withdraw the greater part of our troops and make a contract with the British and American Oil Companies. Let us go slowly, and remember that it took Lord Kitchener some ten years to make an Egyptian army, and that the Soudan was only very gradually reclaimed. What this backing of the Greeks in their war with the Turks is going to cost us, nobody can foretell; probably as much again as Mesopotamia. We feel, sadly enough, that there is little use in talking or writing. The Prime Minister is as unteachable as the Trade Unions. Nothing but the hard impact of financial facts will ever convince either of them that they are pushing the nation down a slope into a gulf which will drown their dreams, both of imperialism and socialism.

ON TAKING A HOLIDAY.

IT is said of wild beasts brought up in captivity, and of prisoners who have been long immured, that when released, they are unable to take advantage of the freedom that is offered them. They do not know what to do with their liberty. They find themselves free from the cage or the prison, only to find that they are in a worse than material bondage. This is the last tragedy of those who suffer any kind of oppression or restraint. The slave will ultimately lack gall to make oppression bitter, and habit soon gives to almost any form of duress a property of easiness which is often the nearest approach to happiness or contentment achieved by the great majority of mankind.

This may seem a rather dismal way to begin an article on taking a holiday, but we feel bound to offer some sort of explanation of those melancholy spots on the earth where men and women, set free for a moment from the ordinary routine of their lives, flock to enjoy themselves at stated seasons of the year. After some reflection on the subject, we have come to the conclusion that people set free for a holiday tend to suffer from precisely the same ignorance of what to do with their liberty as a wild beast born in the Zoological Gardens, and suddenly let loose in St. John's Wood. We imagine that the wild beast, after a more or less uncomfortable time of it, would be secretly glad to find himself once more at home in his cage. From what we have observed of the family holiday of most orderly citizens of the world, it usually resolves itself into one long struggle with exasperation on the one hand, and boredom on the other. It is one long endeavour on the part of all concerned to pretend that nothing could be nicer than to have nothing obligatory to do. It is a conspiracy to cheat oneself and one's companions into the belief that it is pleasant to be idle, to be one's own master or mistress, to be free to do anything one likes. We pretend that such intervals of leisure and refreshment are healthful and necessary; that we could not do without them; that they enable us to obtain physical strength and mental energy by being for a while at liberty to follow our own devices. The reality underneath this pretence may be seen at any seaside resort between June and August. The reality is that all this sudden liberty is a great strain upon those who have been thus set free. After a day or so spent in a preliminary taste of their leisure, people at the seaside have not the faintest idea what to do with themselves, and soon they will be ready to do and to endure almost anything to save themselves from that tired feeling which is the inevitable result of a few days' idleness. Hence the seaside entertainment, which is of a quality for which we should have the supremest contempt elsewhere; hence the seaside orchestra, which would not be tolerated in a London suburban park; hence the seaside lending library, where all the literary rubbish of past seasons is collected for the amusement of the subscribers; hence the assiduity with which people, not over-fond of cold water, dip themselves into the sea on even a frigid day; hence the seaside flirtation, which, like most kinds of flirtation, is more the result of idleness and a vacant mind than of any real interest in the process; hence the whole apparatus of bad entertainment and the general air of silliness and affectation characteristic of the ordinary popular watering place; hence a town like Brighton, which offers Londoners as near as possible the same kind of pursuits as they are accustomed to follow at home in their vacant hours, in order that they may not suffer the fatigue of not knowing in the least what to do with themselves under novel conditions.

Taking a holiday is, in fact, one of those ingenious frauds whereby people are enabled to endure the slavish routine of their working days, by believing in something which does not really exist. The clerk or business man in his office, the housewife at home, the stenographer at her desk, the shopman at his counter, look upon their holidays as a blessed release from the common round. The prospect of these days of freedom and enjoyment sweetens the whole year. There seem to be hundreds of things they will wish to do when the time comes, and there are scores of things which it will be an even greater pleasure, so they imagine, not to do. The happy day arrives. They depart on their several ways, and reach their several destinations. The first hours are really happy. For a brief moment the mere change enlivens the mind, and the mere sense of freedom is exhilarating. Then, however skilfully we may disguise the fact, the miserable truth begins to be illustrated, that people who are not really used to freedom do not know how to employ it to advantage, or how to be honestly happy in its exercise. Few discover what is actually the matter with them. They do not realise that they are pining again for the prison bars; that they are under the dominion of habits which, being suddenly thwarted, secretly crave for satisfaction. They do not perceive that the

rest or the household duties from which they have been released have become as necessary to their content as air to the lungs, and that in the absence of these necessities their faculties are all secretly starving for nourishment. But the symptoms are plain, if the disease is obscure. One and all they begin to go to the local cinema, and the municipal minstrels, and the local library, and to pretend that they are too happy to care about the quality of the things they see or hear or read. The pretence usually deceives the pretenders (which is a way pretences have); but, if you would see beneath it, watch for a moment the faces of our holiday-makers when they are off their guard, or, better still, entice them into conversation. In nine cases out of ten people at the seaside talk first of their rooms, and the food with which they are being supplied; and the burden of their talk on these important topics is usually to the general effect that they are better fed and better housed at home. Not being a philosopher, like the immortal Touchstone, they do not draw the obvious conclusion. Touchstone, arriving in the Forest of Arden, puts the whole truth about the popular holiday in one pregnant observation: "Now am I in Arden. When I was at home, I was in a better place." They have come away from pursuits and surroundings necessary to their daily interest and comfort, and, in the absence of all that makes life worth living from one day to another, they take refuge in any recreation that happens to be at hand without respect to its kind or quality.

When they return to their ordinary labour, they usually do so with a secret satisfaction to be back again. They explain this feeling of renewed life and comfort by saying that the holiday has done them good. So, in a way, it has. It has shown how necessary is the humdrum routine to a really contented existence. Not one man in a hundred has the ability or resource to be happy in a state of freedom. Without the same thing to do every day, and without being obliged to do it, most people would be bored to death in less than six months. Without a settled routine of compulsory work, life for most people would resolve itself into a constant and a losing endeavour to kill time. Those unfortunate people who are not obliged to do anything at all are driven by the sheer instinct of self-preservation to pretend that they are the slaves of duty. Here you have an explanation of all those (mostly useless) activities which require committees with honorary secretaries, and all those social enterprises which occupy the people who are always busy doing nothing in particular. To be really idle requires a special genius. To spend one's leisure well requires a special education. The ordinary holiday simply illustrates the incapacity of ordinary people to do either of these things successfully.

SHORT MEMORIES.

ALL things are always the same, said Lucretius, and even in an age of progress we get occasional confirmation of his insight. When that unfortunate document, the Declaration of London, was being debated in the year 1911 by the lawyers and politicians, it was said that many naval officers were quite unconcerned about it, being of opinion that it would have to be thrown overboard upon the outbreak of war or very shortly afterwards. They were right: yet something of the same aloofness from the knowledge of those who study naval war because they have to wage it, and something of the same unwillingness to seek their counsel, were to be discerned during the recent Conference of international lawyers at Portsmouth, notwithstanding Lord Justice Younger's warning against the framing of rules the probable fate of which was only to be broken. The attitude seems more inexplicable in 1920 than it was in 1911, since the nation had not then just emerged from a war wherein victory was grounded at bottom upon the skilful and unwearied use of sea power.

The International Law Association, besides bringing together amidst pleasant social surroundings lawyers of divers nationalities, does useful work towards the establishment of a code of international conduct which, it is hoped, may in time command the assent of all civilised

Governments. We cannot now stop to discuss all that is implied in that one word "command": but no sane man denies the desirability of a reign of law in the strictest sense between nations, even if no sane man can tell exactly how it is to be brought about within a period which is likely to interest him. To some minds, indeed, its advent appears a forlorn hope: but in what the American Ambassador aptly described at the Conference as a needy world, the chivalry of those who would enlist in such an expedition may not be decried. The cynical negation by Germany of any right but might has not been without echoes in the field of internal affairs: on that ground alone is to be welcomed any public worship of the ideal of ordered justice. Equal earnestness and restraint marked the opening speeches made at Portsmouth, under the auspices of the Association, to advocate that ideal.

It was when the Conference attempted to get to business that we were unwillingly reminded of the poet's words: not because the delegates went straight from the topic of the League of Nations to the discussion of the Laws of Naval War, but because in the consideration of these the old cleavage between professional and legal opinion almost immediately showed itself. A draft code of the Laws of Naval War had been prepared for the Conference by the British Maritime Law Committee of the Association, and to it was appended an amendment, proposed by a member of that Committee, the effect of which was to abrogate the ancient right of a merchantman belonging to a belligerent State to defend herself against capture if she can. We know, as all the world knows, why the Germans challenged this right, which, as Professor Brown Scott pointed out in the *American Journal of International Law* in 1916, has been generally acknowledged not only by English and American but also by French, Belgian, Italian and Swedish authorities. The older German jurists, indeed, had followed the Anglo-American doctrine: but shortly before the war the denial of it was seen to march with the justification of practices which our seamen, at any rate, have not forgotten.

The amendment may have been a well-intentioned attempt to confine fighting to men-of-war, but it has all the appearance of a special plea on behalf of the submarine operating against commerce. "All armed vessels," it ran, "shall be treated as combatants, with all the risks and liabilities attaching to the character of combatants." The presence of a gun, therefore, in the stern of a tramp steamer was to be a valid reason for blowing her out of the water. "Unarmed vessels," it went on, "shall be treated as non-combatants: such vessels shall not be destroyed and shall not engage in hostilities by ramming or otherwise." Even without his gun the intrepid and resourceful merchant seaman was not to be trusted: he might show fight "otherwise." This novelty, which surely would have greatly pleased the judges of Captain Fryatt, was "turned down" chiefly through the plain speaking of Admiral Sir Herbert King Hall, who persistently inquired the reason of so much tenderness towards the submarine. "Ramming," wrote Professor Brown Scott, at a time when his country was neutral, "is an effective method of defence against a submarine, and the fact that a submarine is a frail thing and cannot stand this kind of warfare is its misfortune, not the merchantman's fault."

We are not concerned to flog a dead horse, but merely to show how precarious is the best-meant theorising about war by those without experience of actual operations. Immediately after the débâcle of this amendment it was resolved that the Maritime Law Committee should be all-British no longer, and that the draft code should be further considered by that body reinforced by foreign members. Of any intention to reinforce it by the addition of a naval officer with recent war service one heard nothing: and remembering 1911, it seemed not without reason that Sir Francis Piggott should ask the meeting if what it wanted was another Declaration of London.

The proposal of the Navy's health at the Association's dinner was coupled with the expression of a devout wish that it might never be brought into action.

That sounded a little forgetful also. It was well that Admiral Sir Somerset Gough-Calthorpe, in responding to the toast, reminded the assembly that the vigour of his Service was a factor in international affairs making for peace. The Navy is also a military force, of course, and *hinc illæ lachrymæ*: but even municipal Justice used to be represented bearing a sword.

*QUELQUES FLEURS.

POETRY has become the fashion, and that is all to the good. The later Victorians regarded verse rather as an occupation for Sundays, and their poets as preachers with the moral authority and manners of a Bishop. That is why they had their doubts about Swinburne and Mr. Kipling. They found it difficult to believe that either 'Faustine' or the 'Barrack-room Ballads' would add perceptibly to the reputation of the pulpit.

With us, however, poetry has changed all that. She has left the Church and invaded not only smart dinner parties, but remote parlours where the wax flowers under the glass case resent the introduction of these rivals in the way of artificial blossom. But there is nothing more dangerous than a social success for those not born to the habits of society. Poetry welcomed by illiterate duchesses must beware lest in exchanging the dropped "g" for the dropped aspirate she lose her touch with earth. Pope showed how you could make an imitation great lady out of Euterpe—the only girl that matters, and destroy her. Let us beware of Pope.

These considerations might well be weighed by the young poets, who have become young men of fashion, as, for example, the two Roberts—Graves and Nichols—and the third who shares their common danger, Mr. Aldous Huxley. They are all in danger of being petted out of the strait path of poetry, in which nothing fails like success. Here, for example, is Mr. Nichols taking the stage with 'Aurelia.' Just at the edge of his mind there is the phantom light that no currents of earth generate. It is not light of the sun or moon, nor yet electric nor gas. It was lit—well, he and a very few others know when and where. But Mr. Nichols is busily engaged in attempting to substitute some flame excited by acetylene or petrol. He is not taking trouble. He permits without a shudder such lines to remain as

"of currents circumvolvent in the void"
or

"and wish what then was had now never been,"

which are as stupid as they are examples of sheer technical inefficiency. Moreover, as he indicates by his frequent dedications, he is writing for a number of distinguished, or at least distinguishable, friends, and not for Euterpe, the only friend who matters to a poet. Nor does 'Aurelia' altogether cure him of his foible for cultivated admiration. He sees his mistress, as many young poets before him have, too much as a blonde shadow of the Dark Lady. His twenty-four sonnets on his passion are twenty-four footnotes to a twenty-fifth beginning.

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds
admit impediments."

But we do not for all that despair of him. Another and more actual "Aurelia" may shake him out of a pose, and in any case poetry may cease to have any fashion other than that which Mr. Nichols could not impossibly wear, of such social outcasts as Keats and Shelley.

What is true of Mr. Nichols is equally true of Miss Tree, though in her case the loss to literature is not so serious. Her verse is always on the way to a costume ball—generally at the Albert Hall, with a suggestion of a mask of expensive silks fastened to distinguish it

*Aurelia, by Robert Nichols. (Chatto and Windus, 5s. net.) Poems, by Iris Tree. (John Lane, 6s. net.) Poems New and Old, by John Freeman. (Selwyn and Blount, 10s. 6d. net.) The Elfin Artist, by Alfred Noyes. (Blackwood, 7s. 6d. net.) Enslaved, by John Masefield. (Heinemann, 6s. net.)

from that worn by bourgeois maskers with emeralds about the ears. Life, even for poets, is something more than a ball arranged to surprise the middle-classes, and the fact that there are slums even in Kensington, of which Miss Tree's Muse is ex-hypothesi ignorant, imparts a certain thinness to her work. But that the costumes are nearly always, to use the *mot d'ordre*, "amusing" and sometimes mysterious enough to check the heart in a beat is true. There is cause for thankfulness, and we shall remember, as others after will also remember, that particular masquerade which ends with the lines

"And for some king with decadent tired fingers
to fling a white gardenia at my feet,"

though it is typical of Miss Tree's want of the infinite capacity to take pains that she uses the word "fling," which has the double fault of jarring on the preceding "fling" and suggesting an action never to be performed by decadent tiredness.

Mr. John Freeman is different. He is poor, sweet stuff that both Wordsworth and Mr. Robert Bridges would recognise as seriously intended. He has few faults, no splendid, curable failures. Again and again gentle beauty peers mildly through his lines, accepts decorous salutation and withdraws. But Mr. Freeman has the great advantage of contrast. His work seems unhurried, done at leisure, when compared with the bustle and speed that mark equally Mr. Nichols and Miss Tree. Above all, it has manners, it is well-behaved, and does not bang the door on the enquiring mind. But we cannot, for all that, share the general attitude of applause. Euterpe demands of her admirers something wild and dangerous. Mr. Freeman could sing her to sleep, but we cannot help feeling that he will be involved in the succeeding and delicate silence.

These three are of the new armies of verse. Mr. Noyes and Mr. Masfield represent the older professionals, and from both the recruits have something to learn, though, except possibly Mr. Nichols, we cannot hope that they will acquire what Mr. Masfield has to teach. Mr. Noyes, as the saying is, has given his proofs already. He has been always something of a true poet, but one who has never quite reconciled himself to the ultimate barbarism of the mode. For if the last thing man will civilize is woman, the first thing that poetry will do, when that period of time arrives, is to uncivilize both. Mr. Noyes suffers from civilization, but within the limits thus imposed, he has strength, quiet purpose and his measure of vision. In 'Wireless,' for example, a poem presumably written in wartime which bears reading in peace, he asks for prayers for ships at sea, saying

"Even a blindfold prayer may speed them
and a little child may lead them,"

and again in 'The Little Roads' he discovers the pathway that is always waiting beyond the turn of the lane,

"Yet sometimes at a word, an elfin pass-word,
(O thin deep sweet with beaded rain)
There shines, through a mist of ragged robins,
the old lost April-coloured lane."

This will do. What will not do quite so well is 'Touchstone in a Bus.' These attacks on the new spirit might well have been written by Mr. Kipling, if he had happened to have manners, just as Mr. Noyes might have written the similar attempts of Mr. Kipling if he had had real genius.

Mr. Noyes complains that the New Duckling cries

"I want to run round like a rabbit,
A rabbit as red as a rose."

But why shouldn't the new duckling have illusions? Has the old drake no fancies equally absurd? And isn't the test with both, not whether the dream is a dream, but whether the dreamer can dream it true. "A rose-red rabbit half as old as time" is no more ridiculous than a rose-red city of similar age. Both are unlikely, but both may come true.

Mr. Masfield at any rate could make both true and permanent. We have waited for these poems of his

ever since his novel 'Captain Margaret.' We have seen him looking for his immortality in every grimy bye-street of the widowed spirit and not quite catching her. In 'The Everlasting Mercy' he came up with her just at the last time of all, and she was in sight time and again in 'Dauber.' But in 'The Daffodil Fields' and 'The Bye Street' she was straying. But now she has come home and one more poet takes his permanent place. Not so much for the two narrative poems do we make this claim, though 'Enslaved' and 'The Hounds of Hell' are the best poems of this kind he has written. They are not teased with oaths and roughnesses introduced to indicate power. They move swift and sweet as such verse should, but sweetness and speed are not in themselves enough. In 'Animula' there is added the elfin note that comes not often in a generation, but when it comes gives it new colour. It is plain sense, the miracle of the trumpets about the walls of Jericho. They were the trumpets of poetry that can with a sound build and unbuild cities. Mr. Masfield in this tale of three unhappy lovers told in sonnet-form, is architect of a strange and delicate town. In the central square of the city is a statue

"—Sorrowful Beauty, laughing hand in hand
He heard the trumpets blow in Avalon.
He saw the golden statue stretching down
The wreath, for him, of roses in a crown!"

These are estimable trumpets and a good statue. Poetry is satisfied with the music and the sculpture.

LABOUR TALKS.

ONE of the most amusing features of Democracy in practice is the love of politicians for conferences. Not content with the House of Commons, municipal councils, boards of guardians, etc., where they have at least an apparent right to claim that they represent other people, they love to arrange all sorts of meetings of their own where they can chat about the state of the world—and incidentally impress themselves and endeavour to impress others with a sense of their own importance. The Labour Party has just had one of these conferences at Scarborough. Terrific enthusiasm and passion were generated by the debates and epoch-making resolutions were passed; and yet we may well doubt whether the world is any better or worse off than if the delegates had merely taken an ordinary holiday at Scarborough, had had their photos taken on postcards, had listened to black-faced comedians on the beach and had made excursions in char-a-bancs. The only real result of the Labour Conference is to prove that Labour politicians are stronger in the wind than in the head, and that collectively they are utterly unfit to govern the British Isles, let alone the British Empire. But was it necessary to hold a conference in order to prove that?

The agenda of the conference contained world-shaking proposals. Recommendations were put forward in favour of a general strike which was to make Lenin supreme in the British Isles, of the total prohibition of the working-man's beer, of the acquisition by the State of all railways, mines, land, houses, gas, water, electricity, banks, and so on. These recommendations were, we are told, accepted or rejected on votes of millions, each delegate plumping in the name of all the members of his trade union. It never seems to occur to these good people that the fact that at a trade union lodge meeting (when probably not more than twenty members were present) they were elected to act for the lodge on trade union business gives them no authority whatever to define political policy in the name of all the members. In reality the talkers at Scarborough had just as good a mandate—to use the jargon of modern Democracy—as has a collection of suburban spinsters who meet together to excite themselves over the immorality of the age and describe themselves as a National Society for the Improvement of Character.

Perhaps it is a little unkind to put the question "Quo Warranto?" to the members of Labour conferences. Let us for a moment take them at their own valuation. One of the proposals which came before the conference was in favour of seceding from the Second Inter-

national and of joining the Third. The uninitiated may wonder how the "International" (which, according to theory, is the organisation of all the workers of all countries) can have a second or third edition. The very name implies monopoly, and the very fact that a third international competes with a second is proof that no international really exists. But let that pass. The Second International is predominantly German; the Third is almost exclusively Russian—the first necessity to make any such circus popular with British Labour extremists is that it should be alien in origin and management. The Labour "representative" who urged secession from the Second (German) International pleaded that to send delegates to its meetings would "be shaking hands with murder." On reading this our patriotic optimism was aroused and we rejoiced at the spectacle of British Labour politicians refusing to co-operate with Germans who had been killing British and French soldiers galore for four years. But it was not the killing of British soldiers to which this "representative" took exception. His trouble was the murder by Germans of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, two German agitators. So if we are to take the Scarborough talk seriously, we are to believe that British working men dislike the Second International because two Germans were lynched by Germans. However, by a majority of 494,000 secession from the Second International was refused. The minutes of the proceedings do not explain how many dozen members were actually present when a million and a half votes were recorded in this division. Having thus determined to continue to co-operate with the German Second International, the Conference recorded 2,603,000 votes against and about half a million votes in favour of the prohibition of alcoholic drinks, the majority being presumably of opinion that British working-men should not be deprived of their beer until the dear Germans were ready to do the same.

Quite a false view of British politics is obtained by those who take these conferences seriously. The love of conferences and resolutions has become a mania. Election by so-called popular vote—no matter if the majority of the electors takes no part in the proceedings—has a highly intoxicating effect upon little men whose thirst for power rivals that of any Cæsar or Rockefeller. It is probably all to the good that these enthusiastic people should meet and work off their pent-up energies; but when watching a pantomime it is best to remember that the actors are after all only actors.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE WEST INDIES AND AMERICA.

SIR,—I often find myself in entire accord with your views, but the suggestion in your issue of March 20, that the British West Indies be sold to the United States to defray the heavy war debt owing to that nation, seems to be so repugnant as to call for rebuke. Even if you are indifferent to the indignant protest of the West Indians, the disastrous effects on British colonial prestige that would be sure to follow such a policy would call for some awkward mental readjustments on your part. Moreover, he must be blind who does not see the vital importance of the West Indies to the future of the Empire.

You say the planters ought not to object to your scheme, seeing that they have been neglected by the British Government. Where and when, Sir, did the sentiment of loyalty in British subjects depend on coddling by the British Government? In Ireland, perhaps, at the present time? Is it a reproach to the people of the West Indies that a majority of them are not like the Sinn Féin?

No more serious blunder in Imperial affairs could be made than such a one as you recommend. The mere suggestion at the present moment, when so many are ready to give it currency in order to capitalize the offence, has a disturbing influence on Imperial unity. The responsibility of the British Government and of Englishmen in the West Indies is not limited to the

white planters. The majority of the populations are coloured, and responsibility in their case touches vital relations with millions of black people in Africa.

Apart from his jealous pride in his rights as a British subject, the West Indian negro responds with dismal forebodings and well-founded fears to the suggestion of a transfer of his allegiance to the United States. If you do not understand this feeling you will be helped by reading a very mild article in the *Atlantic Monthly* for April entitled "In the Delta." The West Indian negro clings with tenacity to his allegiance and bitterly resents any move to deprive him of the possession of which he is most proud.

As for the white planters, they are in a better position to speak for themselves, as they will not hesitate to do if the time should ever come when they are called upon to express their choice. But even supposing that the principal of self-determination were forced on the Colonials, with the unlikely result that a majority were found to be in favour of a sale, would it be fair that a minority, with their sons and grandsons for generations, should be compelled to fight against England whenever the United States and England should be at war with each other? It is not the effect on the West Indian populations alone that I would ask you to consider, but also the effect on the sentiment of the Empire. That would be a demoralizing effect, so detrimental to Imperial relations and so embarrassing to future Governments that a debt of a thousand millions would seem a trifle by comparison.

The British Empire is to-day possessed of two great assets in which its strength consists: the Crown and the loyalty of the peoples scattered over the earth. You cannot traffic in that loyalty without diminishing both of these assets. Imperial wisdom and Imperial morality require a correct valuation of, and an Imperial policy conforming to, these two assets. The spectacle of the British Empire bartering its territories and its peoples either to satisfy a grasping creditor or for any other reason will fail to commend itself to British character, and will be rejected by the spirit of British history.

The advocates of this unworthy plan are already rebuked. A few days ago the Prince of Wales visited Barbadoes where, as it happened, a disquieting rumour had preceded him. In an after-dinner speech in the Assembly House, the Prince publicly denounced that rumour, declaring, amid loud cheers, that the Government had no thought of selling any part of the West Indies. By this declaration the Ambassador Prince rendered a great service to the Empire and endeared himself anew to all West Indians of whatever colour. This will be best understood by those who know the apprehension and uneasiness caused by that offensive rumour and the feeling of relief and gratitude that followed the Prince's well-timed words as they flew from island to island and were echoed along the "Spanish Main."

In the memories of the people and the traditions of their children there will be something almost sacred about these royal and reassuring words. They will carry the force of a pledge which no Government can ignore even if one could be found so stupid and so immoral as to contemplate the step that you, Sir, in a moment of depravity that is rare with you, permitted yourself to propose.

DION.

[This letter reaches us from Philadelphia. We are quite aware of the strong objections, political, sentimental, and naval, to the proposal. How many residents in the West Indies would object? Does our correspondent not know that the British National Debt is now eight thousand millions, and that debtors often have to do very unpleasant things?—ED. S.R.]

SWEDEN v. FINLAND.

SIR,—I do not intend to argue about the strongly pro-Swedish line which you have taken up in your article on "Sweden and the Aland Islands" (*SATURDAY REVIEW*, June 26, 1920). I am myself a citizen of Finland of Swedish nationality, one of the more than

350,000 Swedish-speaking inhabitants of Finland, of whom the 20,000 Alanders form only a little minority. Although firmly convinced of the justice of the claims of Finland not to be deprived of a territory, which, as any map will show you, geographically forms a part of the great South-Western Archipelago of Finland, I can at any rate understand the Swedish point of view, just as I, like the immense majority of my countrymen, hope that, whatever happens, Finland and Sweden will always remain on friendly terms with each other.

There is in your article, however, one feature which I find it difficult to understand. I mean the tone in which you have chosen to speak of my country. Finland, in your opinion, is nothing but a "tiny, poor" and miserable State, whose insignificant population (as a matter of fact not very much greater than that of *e.g.* Norway or Denmark) hardly seems to you capable or perhaps even worthy of independent existence, but will fall into the hands of some large power or group. And then, worst of all, poor Finland is an "upstart," one of the "mushroom States that have grown up in the night of war." Surely such an upstart should never be permitted to exist!

I need not tell you that words like those quoted above have been painful reading to one who, like myself, has always been an admirer of the English nation, of English institutions, and of English chivalry.

U. LINDELÖF,

Professor in the University of Helsingfors, Finland.

THE WHITE TERROR IN HUNGARY.

SIR,—We hear a good deal about the blockade or boycotting of Hungary by the Socialists owing to the allegations of the White Terror in that country, but we hear no protests against this from the British Labour Party. How is this? During the war when there was a blockade of the enemy countries, the Labour Party was not sparing in its criticism of this method of "starving out" women and children, but now that we are at peace with Hungary—that is to say, when Hungary has been forced to sign a treaty depriving her of more than two-thirds of her resources—and she needs help as never before, no voice is raised in protest against this blockade.

Are we then to conclude that the former protestations of the Labour party during the war were not dictated by humanitarian sentiments, but were simply a move in the political game?

No right-minded person will approve of such terrorism as is alleged against a section of the Hungarians, and there must certainly be large numbers of Hungarians who will disapprove of it as sincerely as we do, but this blockade will mean that innocent and guilty alike will suffer.

A STUDENT OF HISTORY.

DEMOCRATIZING THE NAVY.

SIR,—I am in a great "muddle of thought" as to the distinction raised between rankers and gentlemen. Is it to be held that a man is a gentleman because his father has rank or cash, and that he is a ranker if his father has neither? I doubt whether the SATURDAY REVIEW or any of its readers would so hold. Or is the distinction to be found in environment? Do the men object to a ranker being put over them because he has for a long time lived with them on equal terms?

So far as the nation is concerned it would appear that we want the most efficient men at the top, and there is every probability that the larger the class that competes the better the chance of success.

The term "covenanted civilian" came into vogue when competition for the Indian Civil Service was thrown open. At that time a man I knew belonging to "the old lot," a man of a well-known and very old family, said to me, "We're the ruling class and mean to be. And if we are, as I say we are, the best men to rule, it is only fair and just to let these outsiders compete on equal terms. We'll beat 'em."

The covenanted civilian of the present day is, at least, equal to one of the "old lot," good as they were.

There is no question involved of birth, the very House of Lords itself exemplifies only an apotheosis of rank and cash. But environment? Do or do not the men object to seeing put over them one who has lived with them for years on a hard bunk and prefer one from a feather-bed? Or do they object to one of their own class being so raised because he knows, not too little, but *too much*? Possibly the men themselves know the truth; why not take a ballot?

F. C. CONSTABLE.

DRINK IN AMERICA AND ENGLAND.

SIR,—I have read with much interest the letter from Mr. Henry Wolf Bikle, of Philadelphia, in your issue of May 22nd, and, as a fellow resident with him in the United States, I can thoroughly endorse his conception of the reasons why the prohibition amendment is acceptable to the majority of the people here.

I would, however, like to go further into the matter, and express the opinion that in England you have little to fear from any attempt to convert the majority in your country to a like acceptance. Admittedly the newly created female vote in Great Britain is a factor to be reckoned with; but, if even half of your women voters sympathise with their men folk in this as they do in other matters, the women's vote will be so divided as to be of little consequence in the decision.

Both countries are thoroughly democratic, and in each the wishes of the majority will be carried out in the long run. Now, there is good reason why the majority of Americans fear and dislike intoxicating liquors in any form, while the majority of the inhabitants of Great Britain, and of Europe generally, do not. The explanation is: that few Americans, comparatively speaking, know good liquor, or understand decent drinking, while Europeans, who produce and consume wine, beer and spirits of all kinds, as a rule, possess good liquors and use them in an intelligent manner.

Leaving continental Europe out of consideration, the British drink wine or beer at their meals; and whisky or other spirits between times, in their houses and as an aid to social intercourse and home comfort. They drink at public bars also; but most of their drinking is not done at a counter, by any means.

Here it has been quite unusual, in recent years, to drink anything at home except water or ice cream (if that can be called a drink), and it was only in rare instances that a whisky decanter was produced on occasions of social enjoyment or business interviews in private houses. In fact, it was considered, by large sections of society, bad form to keep any intoxicants in one's home. The consequence was that men who drank at all had to frequent public bars, which, I need not point out, is a dangerous practice in any country.

It was especially dangerous here for the reason that I alluded to above, namely that good liquor was hard to obtain—impossible in many districts, and very expensive in all. Whisky was made from rye in Kentucky and other states; beer was made by German brewers all over the country, but not quite as in Germany; and wine was made in California. All were advertised as superior to the European article; and all were rushed on to the market as soon as made, without being allowed to mature, for that would have meant tying up capital—an "efficiency" crime. These liquors were dispensed in the "saloons" of the country, mostly by hyphenates of the immigrant class.

Of course, Irish and Scotch whisky, English gin and ale, and Irish stout—also European wines—were obtainable at very stiff prices, in the high class bars of the cities, but the American public, as a whole, knew nothing about them. American drinking generally consisted of gulps of neat rye whisky, often followed by beer as a "chaser," or inordinate swallowing of fresh beer, iced (winter and summer) until it was tasteless—beer which sickened before it intoxicated. In New York, certainly, and probably in most parts of the country, the bars were open all night as well as all day, including Sundays, despite excellent closing laws which were not enforced. Such non-enforcement was profitable to all concerned, except the habitués.

People who did their drinking under such circumstances were often offensive, and even dangerous, in public, and were not usually agreeable associates at home and in business for those who never saw intoxicants, and who constitute the majority of the population; therefore, when it was proposed to do away with drinking, that majority, ignorant of any other method of drinking, willingly assented.

No doubt there are many travelled and cultured Americans and cosmopolitan communities, such as New York, to which the above remarks do not entirely apply, and these, if they had anything approaching the Home Rule which has been offered to Ireland and which Americans deem so insufficient for that part of the British Empire, would be able to preserve their personal liberty and reject prohibition, but they must bow to the will of the majority, which, in this case, they consider tyranny. One consolation to some of us is that the chief sufferers from the reform belong to the classes who love Count Hohenzollern and buy Irish "Liberty" bonds.

It is not likely that any majority in Great Britain will ever be in favour of enforced total abstinence. Men who have been accustomed to good liquor, and know how to use it like gentlemen, are in a permanent majority in "the old country." Unfortunately such men are in the minority here.

ENNISKILLEN.

Westfield, N.J.

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME.

SIR,—Those interested in any charity, hospital or otherwise, could not help feeling somewhat surprised at the views expressed by "Anti-Cant," for such views can hardly tend to improve the cause of charity in these present difficult times. Where your correspondent is mistaken is, I think, with regard to his conception of the *giver* and *receiver* of charity. No one expects those of the upper and upper middle classes who are being forced to dip into capital, to *give* to charity as they used to do; it is to those who have money over and above what is required for a normal existence that appeal letters in the Press are addressed. Nor are the artisans with high wages necessarily the *receivers* of charity. The poor, for whom charities are instituted are, surely, a moveable class, varying according to the condition of a country, and all properly organised charities adapt themselves to the times, and deal with deserving applications from the really poor only.

We all know the "new rich," but do not let us forget the "new poor." Our Lord very truly said, "Ye have the poor with you always."

LEILA L. BAIN.

THE HOSPITALS AND THE PUBLIC.

SIR,—I quite agree with you: it is a pity that Lord Knutsford can't observe the amenities of public argument. His great public services to the London Hospital make him a kind of chartered libertine. Still, no one likes being bludgeoned, even by a peer; though there is someone in 'Nicholas Nickleby'—Mr. Witterterly, perhaps—who says he would rather be knocked down by a man who had blood in him than be picked up by a man who hadn't. I am not like that, and see every reason why a man should write over a pseudonym, as "Anti-Cant" has done. "Who is he? Give me his name!" growls Lord Knutsford, like a schoolmaster with a cane. Don't give him mine, please, Mr. Editor.

The hospitals ought to charge such fees for admission and nursing as will make them self-supporting, if not profitable. They ought, in fact, to be converted into nursing homes, on a large scale, like those which line Beaumont Street and the neighbourhood. Those who can't afford to pay these fees should go to the parish infirmaries, for the support of which all householders and occupiers are heavily rated by the Guardians.

There is one plea for the maintenance of the voluntary system, which is respectable, but, unfortunately, since the war, out of date, if not reactionary—I mean, the plea of charity. It is rightly said, by Lord Knuts-

ford and others, that charity is one of the noblest forms of human feeling, and that if the voluntary system be abolished, there will be no outlet for this Christian virtue. The modern proletariat, however, scorns and rejects charity as an insult to labour, which claims everything as a right, and accepts nothing as a gift. I wish the Labour party would be logical, and if they reject charity, would find the money by rating or taxing themselves. This they will not do either. The question, therefore, recurs, where is the money to come from? The classes that before the war subscribed or left money by bequest to hospitals are now admittedly impoverished by taxation and the depreciation of the capital of their investments. There are, to be sure, the new rich, the ship-owners, and war-contractors, and the very highly paid artisans. Whether the new rich will or will not step into the functions and obligations, civic and eleemosynary, of the old rich, is a matter of opinion. Lord Knutsford evidently thinks he will get as much out of the pockets of the new profiteers as he and the other hospitals used to get out of the country gentlemen and the Puritan commercial class. I do not think so; and holding that opinion, I strongly urge the necessity, if the hospitals are to be saved, of quartering them on the rates or the national exchequer. As the rates in London have already been doubled, and we are threatened with a further liability for building houses, I suggest the abolition of such otiose rates as those for libraries and swimming baths.

NOVUS PAUPER.

P.S.—Since writing the above, I am naturally pleased to see that the governors of the London Hospital have actually adopted the policy of imposing a payment on all in-patients of two guineas for the first week, and one guinea for subsequent weeks. It is, perhaps, not enough: but it is a sensible and courageous beginning. This is, of course, much better than quartering the hospitals on the public taxes or rates.

N. P.

WHAT IS MARY PICKFORD?

SIR,—On Thursday, the 24th June, we learned from a leading article in the *Times*, that Miss Mary Pickford's acting appeals to our English sense of chivalry in a way that makes her "truly an ambassador of our race": the gentlemen of the world "would all be Mary's comforters and defenders in her hour of peril." On the following day another (or possibly the same) scribe bubbles over in the columns of the *Daily Mail*. He saw "fascinating Mary" several times in the course of a "few hectic days, both in Southampton and London," and at last obtained the boon of a minute's conversation with the ambassadress of our race about her forthcoming production called "Suds." "Then I saw the great intellect behind the charming face . . . the wonderful intellect looking through those expressive eyes and lurking round that expressive mouth." "One remembers vaguely that Mary is slightly built," but her bewitching face, added to her fine brain capacity, "is a danger to the community." And so on, and so on.

In the next column we find some still more purple patches on the subject of "Gaby's Gems." The effects of the late Gaby Deslys were about to be sold in Paris, and a magnificent puff preliminary was accorded to the salesmen. We read of "creamy pearls of splendid orient," and the appetite of the intending purchaser was whetted with a reminder that they "were once warmed by her white skin; that sinister diamond pendant rose and fell on her bosom." Gaby, as we know, "was the spoiled favourite of princes, the pet of millionaires; yet all the while there was a tender little woman's heart beating in that dainty, doomed little body." Then there was "one huge, baleful, yellow diamond that looks like a crystallised crime" and, the writer swears, "has smelt much blood" and stared coldly down on dreadful human sacrifices, &c., &c. The new journalism is becoming as flamboyantly "yellow" as Gaby's portentous diamond. Let me add that the sale, despite the *Mail's* superlatives, proved a "frost."

SCRUTATOR.

SIR,—A correspondent asks in your columns for information as to "What is Mary Pickford?" Will you allow me to answer, as I have some faint glimmering of the truth?

Mary Pickford is the revulsion from six years of horror and self-repression, from war and the hell of it, from the hopes of a new era held up to us and now dashed aside. She is the antidote to politics, in all its worst phases, to guile, greed, land-grabbing, propaganda, and the things that are done in the name of civilisation and Christianity.

All these things have left many of us dazed. Profiteering and other evils have left us hopelessly angry.

Mary Pickford represents the best of what we can set against these things. She represents youth, beauty, the joy of living, "make-believe," idealism. Though very tangible, she represents illusion for us. She represents the happiness and joy of youth, and the need we all feel to keep young. She is laughter, delight, fun and fantasy. She represents that innate passion in all our hearts for a good story of love and adventure. She is the antidote to many "anti's." Having been seen in picture by millions, she is the embodiment of our desire—a symbol and a sign. May she long remain so!

That, I think, is the answer to your correspondent.

SOMMERVILLE STORV.

[May we ask why Miss Pickford is more desirable and symbolic than the hundreds of young British beauties who adorn our films?—ED. S.R.]

SIR,—It is only logical that a "cinema star" should be the goddess of Democracy, just as Joan of Arc is the goddess of Chivalry. Democracy cannot appreciate politeness, breeding, refinement, or culture, just as chivalry cannot appreciate the democratic ideals of rudeness, ignorance and selfishness, and loafing.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE.

WOMAN AND EXTRAVAGANCE.

SIR,—The cry goes up for economy. Everybody shouts it—everybody with a voice that can be heard. Unfortunately, those to whom the appeals are addressed don't (or won't) hear. It is obvious that the women of this country hold the key to all private and individual reasonableness in spending. They set the pace. And what a pace it is!

The fact is the average well-to-do woman hates frugality; it leads her to nowhere. She does know what she gets, and where she goes, when she spends; she is a negative creature when she saves. Even during the war she could not forego her instincts and desires. She had to be adorned with the plumage of birds and the skins of animals—anything and everything, so long as it was expensive and struck other people as expensive. It did not matter so much if the article were beautiful or not, so long as it was expensive.

How is it that the luxury trades have flourished like green bay trees during the war, and after? The answer is in one word—woman. She keeps them going. She feels that economy is for men and luxury for her. Let men go to the furthest corners of the earth, to the innermost recesses of Continents, to highlands, lowlands, parched lands, swamplands, to gather adornments for her; she will pay for their labour. Either she or another—the other usually pays, of course, and he is a man. Man foots the bill.

With the country screaming for economy, how is it that the shops, which supply women with their fine feathers, should all be so amazingly prosperous? One understands the big manufacturer, who sells abroad and sees the scramble for his goods, smiling as he asks his high price; but we are supposed to be a reasonable and intelligent people; our women-folk are supposed to be patriotic, sensible and possessed of a sense of public duty. They have votes. They have fought hard, broken windows, slashed works of art, slapped policemen's faces, damaged golf courses and pursued other devious and equally daring ways to get these votes, which proves them to have a keen and ardent sense of public rights and the State's weal. And the State

shouts for economy. The manufacturer does not smile at this cry, but the woman does. Can't women then deny themselves tawdry and barbaric gimcrackery and jewellery in their country's need? Men died in thousands; cannot women save a few thousands of pounds by being a little less extravagant? Thousands of men are maimed for life, blind, deaf, hopeless, and the women fling like spendthrifts! That is their reply.

Women have never dressed so expensively in the history of this country. Everybody in business to supply women tells the same tale. It is one long chuckle of prosperity. The chief seats at theatres are theirs; one can scarcely find a place at the best restaurants unless one has booked a table beforehand; drapers and suchlike people are launching out in newer and greater barns—and the women smile with the satisfaction of those who fear no evil, for man is a poor thing where she is concerned.

But the historian of the future will have a pretty tale to tell of the women who spent during the war and after. For the collection of the historian one might suggest the dividends of the great London drapers, the fact that a claim was made in the Court the other day for a woman's allowance to be increased, to £2,500 a year (one paper had it at £25,000, and may be right); and the picture of four desperate ladies sitting outside a shop on Sunday at 4 p.m., waiting for the doors to open on the next morning (Monday) when there was a Sale!

The complaint is that women not only refuse to deny themselves anything, but won't even spend quietly or reasonably. Are they all gamblers? Is it a case with them of all or nothing, and what does it matter so long as they have a good time? Isn't it possible for some lady with a sense of public duty behind her to cry a halt to her sex and set an example?

W. H. W.

CRUSHING THE MIDDLE CLASS.

SIR,—Allow me, of your kindness, to call your attention to what concerns me, and many others also. In the recent debates in the Commons on the question of strikes, no attention has been paid to two important points, which are well worthy of consideration.

1. The hard lot of the middle classes. The late increase in cost of living falls most severely on them, and specially on poorer members of the learned professions, and not on the wealthy, nor on the poorest people.

So much is this the case, that they are being squeezed out of existence by successive increases in prices caused by ever-increasing wages paid to ever-successive strikers, who get all they want from a weak Government by means of threats to strike, or by striking, for higher wages.

Now, how long is this to last? For how long are we poor, but educated men, to suffer?

2. For look at the contrast between the strikers and ourselves.

We, Army and Navy officers, doctors, solicitors, clergy, architects, engineers, etc., have each spent hundreds of pounds on our education. But of the strikers—railway men, miners, gasmen, postmen, tramway men, etc.—this cannot be said.

Utterly uncultured, scarcely educated, with but little learning that cost but a few pounds to acquire at the most elementary schools, these men are better paid than very many of the learned professors just mentioned. Does this Government, with its well-salaried members, seek to alienate a class of men who form the very backbone of the nation's constituencies throughout the country? Nay, is not our patience already exhausted, now that we are forming, as you know, a Middle Class Protection Society, which is rapidly gaining in members throughout the country at this present time?

I ask you therefore to take the matter into your serious consideration, with others, for it is a serious matter.

N. GREEN-ARMYTAGE,

M.A. Cambridge.

Late incumbent of S. Aidan's, Boston, Lincs.
Now licensed preacher in Chichester Diocese.

REVIEWS

LEON GAMBETTA.

Gambetta. By Paul Deschanel. Heinemann. 15s. net.

NEARLY forty years, crowded with fate and fulfilment, have passed since the death of Léon Gambetta, but his fiery spirit is as alive as ever. No doubt his fame as an orator has over-shadowed his more solid qualities, but behind all the passion and splendour of his rhetoric lay the logical imagination and the constructive power of a true statesman. During the Great War—that war which he foresaw so clearly, and against which, with might and main, he warned his countrymen to 'prepare—his name was an inspiration throughout the length and breadth of France, and, as M. Paul Deschanel has said: "In the hour when France signed the Peace of Right Gambetta was present in our midst and took part in the ceremony." Here in England, too, we may well honour the memory of the man who, during the last ten years of his short life, made an Anglo-French *entente* the central feature of his programme. A new biography of him, from so distinguished a pen as that of the lately elected President of the French Republic should, therefore, be as sure of a welcome in England as in France.

Of the orator, M. Deschanel naturally gives us a stirring picture. Gambetta's eloquence was indeed, as Grattan said of Pitt's, "an era in the Senate." It was tremendously emotional, vivid and inspiring, charged on occasion with a blasting irony, and capable of kindling not an audience merely but a nation. He might, of course, have been capable of all this and yet have deserved little or none of his fame. Here in England we have had some very considerable orators whose names it is, to-day, not only a duty but a pleasure to forget. Gambetta, however, was not only an orator but a patriot and a man of principle. He was "out" not for votes but for France and for her glory. "How I long," he wrote to his friend Arthur Ranc in 1877, in a letter which M. Deschanel is the first to publish, "how I long to realise my ambition for the greater glory of our country, to bring about a Franco-Russian agreement . . . to draw Italy nearer to France! The chief business is to isolate that appalling menace the *Hohen-sollern* dynasty." And later, in a speech at Cherbourg, we have him saying: "We may have a full restitution if it be based upon right; we or our children can look forward to it, for no power on earth can say to any man 'Thou shalt not hope' . . . We who have seen France fall so low must raise her to her feet and restore her to her rightful place in the world. If our hearts beat it is to reach this goal. . . it is to feel that we can count upon the future, to know whether there is, here below, an *immanent justice* in things that will come on its appointed day and at its appointed hour." In such sentences we catch something far beyond mere oratory. The Muse of History is speaking through the patriot and the prophet.

His life was short. Born in 1838, he died in 1882, and his whole life was a conflict, first to secure his own position and then to secure that of his country. It was not easy in Paris and the 'sixties for a young man with a provincial accent, the son of a small provincial tradesman, to make his way in the law. There is a story of him which M. Deschanel does not tell. Mlle. Léonie Léon was not his first love though she was so devotedly and beautifully his last. Before he met her he had proposed to another lady and had been refused by her as "lacking distinction." We can smile at that now, just as he, no doubt, did in the years of his fame and felicity, but it sheds its light. On all this human personal side of his subject M. Deschanel's book is as rich as on the political. He knew Gambetta personally, came under the spell of his eloquence and was honoured by his friendship. M. Hanotaux in his *Histoire de la France Contemporaine*, has told us much of him, but M. Deschanel's page is the warmer. Here we meet the man, are with him in his defeats and his victories, see him in his felicity, and stand by his death-bed.

There is no need to dwell here upon the effort which Gambetta made in 1870 to save France after the catastrophes of that year. The story is as familiar to Englishmen as to Frenchmen. It is, however, worth pointing out how far he succeeded. France in that tragic moment was weary and disillusioned. As M. Deschanel says, "her fall had been too swift and too immense. The capitulation of Paris had robbed her of her last hope." But war à l'outrance was still Gambetta's cry, and with indomitable faith he still bore aloft the flag of his country.

As a direct result of his superb faith France was able to maintain the esteem of the world and her own self-respect, to keep her rank in the human family, to raise herself, and, in M. Deschanel's proud words, to fulfil the destiny Gambetta had planned.

Perhaps the most notable revelation in the book is that of the foresight of one whom Gambetta was proud to honour among his friends, the young English Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII. The following passage is from a letter addressed by Gambetta to his friend, Rancis, in 1875:—

"Russia's political aims seem likely to be impeded by Austria, who has already begun to assume a hostile front. She is bringing Roumania within the orbit of her influence. Can you see all this culminating in an alliance between Austria, Roumania and Turkey against Russia? What a conflict that would mean! To the Prince of Wales, however, the prospect seems by no means remote. He does not share the anti-Russian feeling displayed by a certain section of his countrymen. He throws all the weight of his youthful authority into the scale against any step that might prove harmful to Russia's interests. In my opinion he has the makings of a notable statesman. . . . It is as clear as daylight that Bismarck is angling for an alliance with Austria. I think that before long England and Russia will be on our side if only we adopt a suitable policy at home."

Here and there, too, we catch a ray directed upon the typical characteristics of the Boche. For example, in 1877 Graf Henckel von Donnersmarck, who had married the Marquise de Paiva, owned the château of Pontchartrain and also had a town house in the Champs-Élysées, where he used to give famous dinner-parties, one of his most frequent and honoured guests being Gambetta. M. Deschanel quotes from a letter written by this worthy on October 17 in that year to Prince Bismarck, in which, with a characteristic German mixture of treachery and servility, he offers to play the spy on Gambetta as one of his intimates. This was a little too German even for Berlin, and Herbert von Bismarck, on behalf of his father, declined the offer.

THE MIRACLE OF THE MARNE.

The March on Paris and the Battle of the Marne, 1914. By Alexander von Kluck, Generaloberst. With Portrait and Map and Notes by the Historical Section (Military Branch) of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Edward Arnold. 10s. 6d. net.

The Battle of the Marne. By George Herbert Perris. Methuen. 10s. 6d. net.

ONCE upon a time her Fairy Godmother crossed France with the holy waters of the Marne to exorcise the German Devil who, throughout her history, has again and again desecrated France's sacred soil, pillaging, burning, raping, but has always eventually been hurled back across the Rhine; the spell has worked as efficaciously to-day as in the ninth century, history repeating itself even in the smallest details; indeed, the ancestor of that Prussian Uhlán, who smuggled home to his Gretchen a looted Buhl clock in 1914, might, in his day, have been observed in the ranks of Otho's savage marauders, humping a sun-dial, as he slunk back to the Fatherland.

'The March on Paris, 1914,' by von Kluck, and 'The Battle of the Marne' by Mr. G. H. Perris, when

studied together, enable us to view in fair perspective the stirring events of 1914, which hitherto have been successfully veiled by the Press Censor.

Von Kluck's diary is esoteric tactics: essentially a work for the professional student, and somewhat irksome reading at that. The accompanying map is so unwieldy that we recommend the industrious reader to clear a wide space on the floor of his library before attempting to fix the topographical references which abound in the text.

As becomes a German officer of high rank starting on a campaign, von Kluck poses successfully as the brutal soldier in whose heart the last spark of humanity has been quenched by stern discipline. We know that it was almost impossible for the wretched civilians in the country overrun by the First German Army to obtain firearms. Nevertheless he charges them with "murdering" his soldiers by "firing from behind hedges," and the efficiency of his *agents provocateurs* is revealed in the cynical satisfaction with which he relates that "punishments under martial law, the shooting of individuals and the burning of houses, became numerous along and behind the front."

Through the *Generaloberst*, too, we learn the interesting fact that the German officer not only lies to defend his reputation as a gentleman, but also to conceal his military incompetence as an officer, and our derision is provoked by the wireless message despatched to the Supreme Command, "The First Army requests to be informed of the situation of the other armies whose reports of decisive victories have so far been frequently followed by appeals for support."

The poor man was, indeed, ill-served by the Supreme Command, for he went plunging on into "the heart of France in his victorious march"—as his Kaiser described it—into the jaws of defeat—as we know to-day—lulled into the delusion that all the German armies on his left were making equally successful progress. On the 30th August, the day after the French Fifth Army had inflicted a heavy defeat upon von Bülow at Guise, von Kluck received the wireless message, "To gain the full advantages of the victory, a wheel inwards of the First Army pivoted on Chauny towards the line La Fère-Laon is urgently desired." A wheel inwards was, in fact, urgently desired, not, however, to take advantage of any victory, but to draw the pressure off the front of von Bülow's shattered army.

Now, this appears to us to be the most interesting fact related in the book, because it gives the key to the riddle of von Kluck's famous swerve to the south-east, when, apparently, he had only to march straight on in order to reach Paris; that fatal swerve which presented such an opportunity to Manoury and his "mass of manœuvre," assembled with such skill and secrecy by the French Generalissimo and hovering unknown to von Kluck on his right flank.

The Supreme Command no less than von Kluck recognised that the important thing was to inflict a decisive defeat upon the French. *Nach Paris* was a good enough slogan to hearten the weary, dusty men in field-grey panting along the scorched roads; but the bloodless occupation of the French capital could lead to no decision: at least, not until Marshal Joffre's armies had been destroyed.

Von Kluck has been charged with disobedience to orders because he failed to protect the western front by marching in echelon behind von Bülow's army; indeed, von Bülow makes a definite complaint of his colleague, who, "instead of being echeloned behind, was echeloned in front"; but then von Bülow was so exacting. He was continually imploring von Kluck to help him by making a flank attack upon the Fifth French Army. In our opinion, von Kluck effectively deals with this charge: his mission was to drive the French armies away from Paris to the south-east, and to endeavour to envelop their flank; he could not have formed his army in echelon behind von Bülow without breaking off contact with the French and retiring, and this would have been a fatal move, necessitating the abandoning of his mission.

Von Kluck swerved because he was compelled to swerve; to prevent dislocation; to keep in touch with the units on his left, shaken and weakened by successive blows delivered by the French rear guards, reduced in numbers by the ever-lengthening lines of their communications, by the fatuous policy of withdrawing several army corps at this critical juncture for service in East Prussia. The all-important matter was to keep in touch with von Bülow: when subsequently von Kluck was compelled by Maunoury's attack on the Oureq to withdraw the II corps from its position in front of the Fifth French Army, and move it back west, he opened a gap between his army and that of von Bülow, which von der Marwitz with all his skill—and his skill was great—was unable to fill. This gap was his undoing; from that moment the game was up: the Battle of the Marne was lost.

Von Kluck, throughout his diary, manifests his disappointment at being unable to compel the British Expeditionary Force and the Fifth French Army to stand and fight: between the 25th August, when he defeated General Smith Dorrien's Corps, and the 1st September, when the 4th and 6th English brigades held up the II Corps at Villers Cotterets from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., von Kluck lost contact with the British: he was utterly misinformed as to the strength of the troops on his front; he knew nothing of Marshal Joffre's mass of manœuvre assembling to the west: he was, indeed, ill served by the Intelligence Bureau. The French and British armies, refusing action, had lured his army, together with those of von Bülow, von Hausen, the Duke of Württemberg and the Crown Prince into the jaws, the upper jaw being Verdun, and the lower Paris. Von Kluck swerved to avoid Paris, just as the Crown Prince swerved to avoid Verdun, closed in towards the centre, the sole remaining hope of a swift and decisive German victory lying in a concentrated frontal attack upon the left centre of the Allied Armies with a view to smashing them by the weight of numbers.

We welcome Mr. Perris's account of the "many acts in the Battle of the Marne one and indivisible," and esteem it as the truest and clearest history of the Allied Armies during August and September, 1914, which has appeared in English. For the first time we can appreciate, in their true proportion, the achievements of the different armies; we can admire the peculiar genius of Marshal Joffre, his noble courage, honesty and equanimity under overburdening responsibilities; and we can weigh the heavy debt of gratitude due to the French Generalissimo.

Heretofore we have focussed our gaze too closely upon the work of the British Expeditionary Force; what Englishman has heard of the Trouée de Charmes, Etain, Novion-Porcien, or the Grand Couronné de Nancy?—yet these are all victories gained between 24th August and 6th September, 1914, which may be proudly borne on French battle-standards.

It is impossible to read Mr. Perris's narrative of the desperate combats of Marshal Foch's army in Cham-

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A TRANSCENDENTAL PRESCRIPTION.

The Release of the Soul. By Gilbert Cannan. Chapman and Hall. 5s. net.

MR. CANNAN has been looking down upon the world, and behold, he finds it in a terrible condition. For instance, "there are no great figures to be seen towering above their fellows, no women who outshine their sisters in beauty, or in charm, or flaunting wantonness." Seeking consolation, therefore, he looks around for something like that calm soul of things which Matthew Arnold found in Kensington Gardens, and in this curious book he describes the research. It is an embarrassing book to read. One feels like an intruder upon a privacy, for really Mr. Cannan appears to have suffered considerably. He often describes himself as having endured convulsions and intense and terrible emotion, and on one occasion a symbol—a circle containing two diameters at right angles to each other—burned itself into his brain in whirling fire, and ultimately reduced him to the extremity of bidding goodbye to his intellect without a pang of regret. Presently he becomes a little less subjective, and recommends the theatre, very much as a doctor might recommend fruit salt, but he takes care to remind the dramatic critics that it cannot help them, poor fellows! Finally he dismisses Work, Religion, Art as a practical formula, and hints that he has something very different to offer; but as it cannot be put into words, so transcendental is it, we can only feel more acutely than ever that there is doubtful taste somewhere. Either so "private and confidential" a book ought not to have been written, or we should not be reading it.

"HEARTEASE" DE LUXE.

Beauty and Bands. By Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler. (Hon. Mrs. Alfred Felkin). Constable. 7s. 6d. net.

MANY years ago the present reviewer read 'Concerning Isabel Carnaby.' Still more years ago he was compelled by pious relatives to read on Sunday Horner's 'Penny Stories.' The book under review is by the author of the former, but far more reminiscent of the latter. All the ingredients are there. The beau-

tiful and selfish heroine who sells herself to a peer; the homely and virtuous cousin; the railway smash and consequent disfiguration which results in loss of memory and identity; the eventual discovery that the disfigured one is really the erring heroine—perfected through suffering—and, of course, the dear old country-gentlewoman who is piously confident that all will come right in the end. Gone—we hope not for ever—is the sparkle of Mrs. Felkin's earlier books: the standard in this is rarely higher than that of the Heartsease Library. Moreover, we are asked to sympathise with a heroine who having with her eyes open married, for his title, a man who had always bored her as a lover, discovered that he bored her more as a husband. Frankly we find it difficult to do so, and we do not think the book worthy of the author's reputation.

A CLAY TOO FINE.

The Book of Youth. By Margaret Skelton. Collins. 7s. 6d. net.

THE story of Monica Harthen from childhood in a Lancashire farm to her marriage in London, introduces us to the world of young women who, some ten years ago, were the principal recruits for the Suffragist movement, and pictures their development with considerable accuracy and power. As a story the childhood of Monica is excellent, among the best child studies we have met for some time. When she grows up she is not so interesting as some of the other characters in the story who are less worked on, such as the sisters Dolly and Violet. Anthony, the modern musician, is too a most successful figure. Monica in the world is too sensitive, not that the evils against which she reacts are to be minimised in any way, but that the reaction should be stronger in a different way. The story is distinctly well put together and written, and, if it does not prove to be the one book that everyone is said to be able to produce, gives us hope of a new novelist of character.

MOTHER AND SON.

An Imperfect Mother. By J. D. Beresford. Collins. 7s. 6d. net.

WE are told, in the lascivious jargon of the Freudians, that this story is a study of the Oedipus complex. To our mind it is in the direct succession of the great English novels of the second order. Mothers have been more attached to their sons than to their husbands often enough before, and this story turns, with relentless art, on a double abandonment of the mother for the lover. Where it might be thought to fail, is in the too subtle characterisation of Cecilia; older hands would have broadened their touches. It is a fine piece of work.

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MUSIC NOTES

AT THE OPERA.—The management has shown its wisdom in getting rid of one of the Puccini blood-curdlers—'Suor Angelica,' to wit. That leaves only 'Il Tabarri' and 'Gianni Schicchi' to provide the evening's entertainment, for which they more than suffice; besides contriving so that one does not miss Signora Dalla Rizza, who returned last week to America. Moreover, the incredible but amusing Gianni can now come upon the scene at a reasonably early hour. There was a revival on Tuesday of 'Thais,' with Mme. Edvina in her old part of the Alexandrian courtesan, M. Maquenat as Athanaël, and M. Oger as Nicias. The cast was therefore a good one, and so was the performance, for in none of her rôles is Mme. Edvina seen or heard to greater advantage. The other revival of the week—that of Gluck's 'Orfeo,' with Dame Clara Butt in the title-character which we heard her sing at the Lyceum in 1892 when she was a Royal College student—must be dealt with another time. Meanwhile it is a satisfaction to record that Cimarosa has fared better than Pergolesi at the hands of the Russian raiders. Everyone is enjoying 'Le Astuzie Femminili' more than 'Pulcinella,' not only because it affords an adroit example of legitimate and skilful grafting, but because it preserves whatever is worth preserving in the old Italian farce and Cimarosa's tuneful music, with a crescendo of spirited fun and humour that culminates in a perfectly authentic, appropriate spectacle, yclept 'A Russian Ballet.' Surely if the union of opera and ballet, against which we protest when it is clumsy, artificial, violent, is to have any sort of justification, it cannot be provided with one more unanswerable in its logical completeness than 'Le Astuzie Femminili,' which, by the way, is adequately sung by some Russo-Italian *buffo* artists, admirably danced, and quaintly mounted.

BUSONI THE COMPOSER.—It should be noted as a sign of the times that the accredited judges of contemporary music find it very hard to make up their minds concerning the precise quality and value of Signor Ferruccio Busoni's compositions. Or is it that they are 'straddling' because they are afraid of being caught? Do they fear, some of them, that this fantastical, bizarre, complex, invertebrate stuff is actually a forerunner in the race towards what is periodically denominated 'the music of the future?' For our part we frankly refuse to believe it. Signor Busoni does not fright us with his false fire. We devoted the best part of a busy evening to listening attentively to what he conducted and played off his own bat at Queen's Hall last week, and can assure him that all his dexterous tricks and devices with the orchestra left us far colder than the candid legerdemain of Dr. Lynn (who was wont to tell us "how it was done") or Messrs. Maskelyne and Devant. What if the wisecracks at Hambrugg did perform his opera, 'Die Brautwahl,' two years before the war? They probably did it out of consideration for Hoffmann's story as much as Busoni's music, but that does not increase our liking for the latter in suite form, where it tells us absolutely nothing, except that it seems singularly devoid of musical ideas or melodic charm; and that mysterious, squeaking noises, scrappy fragments of orchestral colour, ghostly tremolos alternating with wild outbursts and pandemoniums of sound, do not constitute the kind of material whereof immortal operas are made. The use of a beautiful Hebrew tune like the 'Kol Nidrei' for the delineation of a Hebrew character may be rather obvious, but it is welcome as a sort of oasis in the desert. Less happy, though, are both selection and treatment of the so-called Indian melodies upon which Signor Busoni has based his 'Indian Fantasy' for piano and orchestra, one of the most chaotic and incomprehensible pieces ever offered to an indulgent British audience. Our sole consolation lay in the surmise that, even if the London Symphony Orchestra with Mr. Julius Harrison momentarily at the helm might some day renew their ungrateful effort, it would be only when the composer himself was at the piano, for none but he would be capable of playing the solo.

HANDEL AND THE RECITAL-GIVERS.—According to the trustworthy accounts of those who remained in town on the three Handel Festival days, the attendance at the events which clashed with the Sydenham meeting suffered quite seriously. The adventurous recitalists who took their chance reckoned without their host; those who forgot all about the opposition had cause to regret the oversight. For altogether some 60,000 persons passed through the Crystal Palace turnstiles during the Festival, which did not leave much of a surplus for London concerts; and the success of the affair was both artistically and financially far greater than had been anticipated by most people. Indeed in the end one found most of the old critical superlatives being trotted out to meet the requirements of the situation, especially as the 'Messiah' came last instead of first on the programme, thereby ensuring the largest crowd of the week to wind up with. This plan should certainly be adhered to another time, but we suggest as a further improvement that the opening day be devoted to half-selections from 'Israel in Egypt' and 'Judas Maccabæus,' and the Selection Day itself to miscellaneous items taken from the remaining oratorios. Under the circumstances referred to we are unable to do more than briefly record the interesting joint recital given on the Tuesday by Miss Dorothy Robson and Mr. Joseph Coleman; the well-chosen programme of Bach performed by Mr. Claud Biggs; the favourable impression again created by Mr. Harold Williams, the Australian baritone; and the excellent work done in various fields of pianistic achievement by Mr. Frank Laffitte. On Monday last Miss Olga Carmine, the young Italian pianist of whom we have already had occasion to speak highly, again won golden opinions in a recital of modern works given at Wigmore Hall.



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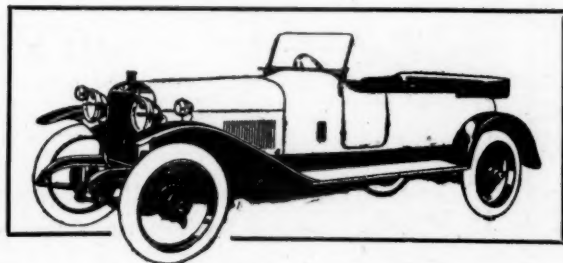
MOTOR NOTES

To the real enthusiast motoring is an object in itself. The car owner who drives from sheer enjoyment of the game seldom gets tired of being at the wheel. He may become physically wearied, but it is very rarely that one finds him in that state of being colloquially known as "fed up." Despite this it is unquestionable that many motorists would derive greater enjoyment from the pastime if they had a definite object in their runs beyond the mere covering of miles. When one is on tour, visiting, shopping, or taking part in some road competition, there is, of course, a clearly defined object for one's driving. But it is on those comparatively short runs, taken at odd times, that much keener enjoyment can be derived from the car than is generally recognised. At the appropriate seasons of the year a good many motorists make a practice of visiting the local haunts of the particular flowers that are then flourishing. Thus, for instance, one takes a trip out of town on a primrose jaunt, a daffodil excursion, a bluebell expedition or a rhododendron hunt. These may become annual events, and they provide an enjoyable anticipation as the seasons come round. Other trips of a similar kind will readily suggest themselves to the naturalist, the botanist and everyone who has an interest in outdoor life. A more strenuous objective for an afternoon's run would be to search out the steepest hill within reach and try the points of the car upon it. Test gradients are not always found upon main roads, and very often a motorist lives within a few miles of particularly interesting lanes and byways without knowing of their existence. Contour maps will reveal the stiffest climbs within reach if one wishes to grapple with them without any preliminary exploration. Apart from proving the paces of the car, or one's own qualifications as a driver, the climb to the top of a particularly high point nearly always rewards one by the views it affords. Another pleasant possibility is to trace out the source of a river, and some interesting

rambles off the beaten track are almost invariably provided by this diversion. Evening runs in the cool of the day are most enjoyable at this season. A novel interest can be added to them by arranging a dinner picnic in some secluded beauty spot by the wayside. Picnics in this country are almost invariably of the lunch or tea order, but our experience teaches that with a little ingenuity on the part of the ladies a highly enjoyable dinner picnic is possible. All these possibilities, and others that may occur to the reader, add a new spice of interest to one's rambles abroad. They are, of course, something quite different from using the car as an adjunct to other sports and pastimes. This is done by the devotees of practically all outdoor recreations, and the automobile very often increases their enjoyment of their particular sport as nothing else could.

The motor-cycle Tourist Trophy races in the Isle of Man, which we witnessed with much interest, provided two excellent sporting events. Both senior and junior races were well contested, and, although there was plenty of exciting incident, no fatality or serious accident occurred, as has generally happened in previous years. The sensational culmination of the Junior race in which Cyril Williams pushed his 2½ h.p. A.J.S. machine over three miles to the finishing line, made him a popular winner, although it is questionable whether it is right to allow a win with a motor-cycle that is out of action. The winner of the Senior race, T. C. de la Hay, covered the 227 mile course on a 3½ h.p. Sunbeam at the remarkable average speed of over 51 miles per hour. The first award of the Nisbet Prize was made to F. W. Applebee, a veteran of 58, who accomplished a remarkable ride on his 2½ h.p. Levis, after rectifying a magneto defect. Another splendid exhibition of endurance was provided by R. O. Clark, who rode his 2½ Levis to victory in the 250 c.c. class, after a spill which necessitated his hammering his front wheel into shape with a boulder.

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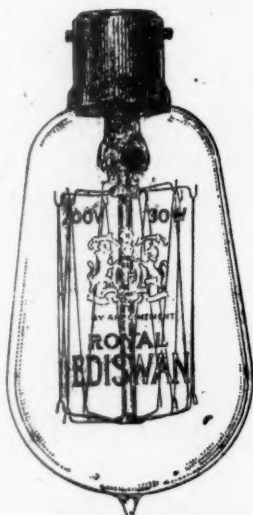
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MARCONI'S WIRELESS TELEGRAPH

MR. GODFREY ISAACS' REPLY TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

THE ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company (Limited) was held on the 29th ult. at the Connaught Rooms, Kingsway, Senatore G. Marconi, G.C.V.O., LL.D., D. Sc., chairman of the company, presiding.

The Chairman, in the course of his speech, said: Turning to the profit and loss account, the balance of contracts, sales, traffic and trading accounts amounts to £946,997 6s. 4d., which is approximately £180,000 over and above the preceding year's figures. There is, of course, added to this the sum of £590,000 which was received as damages for breach of contract. There remains a balance to be carried forward to balance-sheet of £1,220,739. This sum, added to the balance brought forward from the previous year, results in the very substantial sum of £1,684,526. We are paying 15 per cent. on the Ordinary shares. We have put forward a scheme under which we are prepared to erect for our own account, and at our own cost, a very complete chain of wireless stations throughout the whole Empire, which will not cost the country a single penny. Not only that, but we have offered that 25 per cent. of the profits derived from the service, after making proper provision for interest on capital and amortisation, shall belong to the State. In the hands of private enterprise this 25 per cent. should represent a very considerable sum indeed.

Many new patents which I consider of value have been taken out or applied for, and a new device with which I first carried out tests on ships of the Italian Navy has been considerably developed by Mr. C. S. Franklin. By means of this arrangement the electric waves are propagated in a beam in any desired direction only, instead of being allowed to spread out in all directions.

Great progress has also been made, not only in wireless telegraphy, but in wireless telephony, which must soon be turned to very considerable commercial account, in respect of our recently acquired knowledge of telephones with wires. Practical application of these new principles has already been made in America and in Germany.

Mr. Godfrey C. Isaacs (deputy chairman and managing director): Just as I was coming to the meeting I had a copy of the committee's report placed in my hands. It is, as you see, a very long report, and I have not even had time to read it all through yet, but I have seen some few things in it which are interesting, and about which, perhaps, I may even at this short notice say something to you which, I hope, will be of some interest and perhaps a little consolation to you.

The report, in my view, apart from the technical information which it gives—which is very interesting and which is highly satisfactory to the Marconi Company—is one which is obviously guided by the very clever hands of an experienced chairman of Parliamentary Committees, and I do not think we want a very great stretch of imagination to know how easy it would be to obtain the unanimous support of a number of technical gentlemen to the views so cleverly put forward in this report, and which would appear to technical gentlemen to be so natural, particularly when you bear in mind that all the substance which this report contains, and upon which, I might say, it is based, so far as the commercial side of the question is concerned, is based upon figures and information which were supplied by the assistant secretary of the Post Office.

The assistant secretary of the Post Office in this case was Mr. F. J. Brown, and I think you will agree with me that the evidence and the immense information which Mr. Brown put before the court in July, 1919, necessarily committed him to the evidence and information which he would give to this committee. There were reams of paper containing figures which were put forward to endeavour to belittle the Marconi claim which was before Mr. Justice Lawrence last year, and these figures showed, according to Mr. Brown, that the possible services of the Imperial stations, had they been constructed, would have resulted in such a small number of words transmitted and received, and such a small gross receipt that the total value of the whole contract, had it been carried out, would not have exceeded £47,500. Well, that was a matter which, as you know, was then very fully threshed out in court, and the judge did not accept Mr. Brown's views; in fact, instead of estimating the value of the contract at £47,500, he, if I remember rightly, put it approximately at £1,200,000, which, reduced to present-day value, brought it down to some £590,000.

I mention those figures only to indicate upon what sort of material this report is based. The report deals with very much the same figures as were placed before the Court, and I am inclined to think that when the matter is considered a little later by Parliament, the figures which will be looked into will be, perhaps, very different from the figures which have formed the basis of this report, and which were put before the Court in 1919. The technical side of the report is very interesting. I cannot

find the reference in the report which I have received, but I will quote from a morning newspaper. "The three chief factors of a satisfactory commercial service are reliability, speed, and cheapness. For this reason the system of the thermionic valve, which has revolutionised wireless practice in the last five years, is recommended." Well, ladies and gentlemen, if any of you followed what took place a year ago, you will remember that the Post Office declared in Court before Mr. Justice Lawrence that the Poulsen arcs, which they were then erecting, were a most efficient and up-to-date service, and that they would do all that was required, and they required no patent. No Marconi patents were required for the purpose. Our evidence was to the effect that the Poulsen arcs belong to the Marconi Company, but that they were obsolete, that wireless telegraphy had made great strides, and that the thermionic or ionic valves had superseded the Poulsen arc.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think that was ridiculed by the Post Office a year ago. It is therefore some satisfaction to know to-day that the committee of experts who have inquired into this matter declared that great strides had been made during the past years by reason of this thermionic valve. I agree that great strides had been made, and I think that greater strides are being made daily. I have seen from this report sufficient to know that they had very little information of an up-to-date character before them, and it is perfectly natural that they should have very little up-to-date information, for the only people who had that knowledge are ourselves. It is recommended here, quite cleverly, outside the terms of reference, but just what one would have expected, that these stations should be State-owned. It is true that it is put a little bit cautiously. On page 16 they say, "The question of State ownership versus private ownership of Imperial wireless communication not coming within the terms of our reference, we are restricted in our examination." I agree. It did not come within the terms of their reference, but although, notwithstanding the fact that it does not come within the terms of their reference, they made quite a strong point of placing before the Government the great advantages that would accrue if they were State owned and controlled by the Post Office.

At all events, we do know this—that Mr. Brown, on behalf of the Post Office, in 1919, told the Court that the service which the Imperial chain of wireless stations would provide would necessarily be limited, even though his calculations were wrong, and ours were right, because he said, "If we found that the Imperial chain of stations did more than what we say, then we should have to raise the prices of wireless telegrams in order to protect the cable companies." That is the sort of thing we have in front of us, if we are going to have an Imperial chain of stations controlled and worked by the State or by the Post Office.

Let me assume for a moment, however, that the stations are going to be built by the State, and they are going to be worked and owned by the State. What is our position? They must have the thermionic valve; the technical committee say so. Right! Beside a good many other things; but they must have that. The thermionic valve is controlled by a number of very important master patents. Some of them—most of them—are taken out by gentlemen in the Marconi Company. Some of them—some very important ones—are taken out by very able people in America; and there are others equally important which belonged to the Germans. All of us in Germany, in America, and here have devoted ourselves very much to this great development in wireless telegraphy, and it is only natural that each should have discovered something that is of value in connection with this thermionic valve. Well, ladies and gentlemen, the thermionic valve is covered by master patents taken out in America, Germany, and England. I do not care which form of thermionic valve is used. I do not care whether it is American, whether it is German, or whether it is English, because every one of these patents—every one of these master patents—is the property for the whole of the British Empire of the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co. That being so, ladies and gentlemen, whether in this report and in the estimate of costs, does the committee deal with the 10 per cent. of the gross receipts to which the Marconi Company would be entitled, and how do they show that they are going to avoid paying to our company 10 per cent. of the gross receipts, if they carry out their own recommendations? If we do not build these stations we shall be entitled to a very substantial royalty, and I do not see how that royalty can be anything different from what the Government itself found fair a few years ago.

What was fair and proper then I think they would be obliged to pay us in future, assuming that they have recourse to the recommendations of their committee. I fear nothing at all from this report, and when I have had more time to study it, and have had the assistance which I shall receive from others in connection with the report, I hope that we shall be able to dispose of many of the things which appear as they do as extracts in the morning papers, and which must be very alarming to many of you, but I assure you are not alarming to us. I think I have said all I need say upon this subject. At the moment you may be perfectly certain that we shall not sit still. I will now conclude by seconding the resolution which has been submitted to you, and I and the chairman will reserve to ourselves the possibility of answering any questions which touch upon the commercial side of the company which you may wish to put.

After remarks by shareholders of a complimentary character, especially with reference to Mr. Godfrey Isaacs, the report was unanimously adopted and the formal business transacted.

BRITISH CYANIDES CO., LTD.

EXPANSION OF BUSINESS.

THE ANNUAL ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the British Cyanides Co., Ltd., was held on the 23rd ult., at the Cannon Street Hotel, E.C., Mr. C. F. Rowsell (the chairman of the company) presiding.

The Secretary (Mr. G. N. Monkhouse) read the notice convening the meeting and the auditors' report.

The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, said that the gross profit for the year on trading amounted to £69,919, as against £62,720 for the previous year, while manufacturing and general expenses were £42,265, as compared with £40,992. The balance of profit for the year, subject to excess profits duty, if any, was £25,042, as against £20,572. It was very satisfactory that they had succeeded not only in maintaining their profit during the past year, but in increasing it substantially, when it was borne in mind that during the whole of that period they had been extending their works and had had to carry out many vital alterations in their existing plant. It must also be remembered that the whole of the year had been one of very great difficulty from the point of view of trade. The result secured was undoubtedly due to the energy with which the business had been run and to the loyal assistance which the managing director had received from their general staff and also from the whole body of workmen. In the balance-sheet there had been a considerable change during the year. The old works, described as leasehold works and buildings, together with goodwill, etc., stood in the books last year at £92,605, and this figure had been increased to £101,066, £14,282 having been spent on buildings, plant, and new developments in this part of their works. Their new freehold works had been increased from £63,441 to £166,053, the outlay during the year amounting to £104,121. The extensions and alterations were of a very substantial character and well might have interfered with the profit-earning of the business while they were in progress. Referring to investments in allied companies, he said that the Oldbury Syndicate now stood at £34,758, the loan to that company having been increased by a little over £8,000 during the year, representing the costs of the experiments which had been carried out during that period on the barium process. He was satisfied that the work carried out on this process had greatly advanced the company on the way to complete success in this business.

With regard to the British Potash Co., they were now in the middle of important negotiations which would no doubt result in a considerable change in the position of the company before the shareholders met again next year. The items representing the working capital assets of the business other than the amount for calls which they had still to make on their partly-paid shares totalled £159,535, as compared with £90,452 last year, and there was still £48,542 to be called up on the new issue of shares. They were transferring to reserve account, out of the surplus arising from the premium on the issue of shares and the surplus which had arisen from realisation of investments, £77,000, bringing it up to £100,000. The directors recommended a dividend on the Ordinary shares for the last half-year of 10 per cent. per annum, carrying forward, subject to excess profits duty, if any, £3,982.

Sir Arthur Duckham, K.C.B., seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

ANTOFAGASTA (CHILI) AND BOLIVIA RAILWAY CO., LTD.

IMPROVED PROSPECTS FOR CURRENT YEAR.

THE THIRTY-SECOND ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the Antofagasta (Chili) and Bolivia Railway Company (Limited) was held on the 29th ult., at Winchester House, Old Broad Street, E.C.

The Hon. Charles N. Lawrence, Chairman of the Company, presided, and, in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, said that the opinion as to the results of the year expressed by him at the last meeting had been borne out. The year had culminated in the lowest net profits since 1907. Everything had been done to economise in working, but despite all efforts it had been a very poor year. They were left with a balance of £858,221, including the amount brought forward from 1918, and the board were able to recommend a final dividend of 6½ per cent. on the Deferred Ordinary stock, making 9 per cent. for the year. He thought they would agree that that was all that could reasonably be done. In June last they had been granted an increase of 15 per cent. on all rates except second-class passengers, where the increase was 5 per cent. Those new tariffs came into force on the 10th of September last, except in the case of nitrate and second-class passenger tariffs, which ruled only from the 1st of January, but the increase in tariffs granted last year was to compensate for increased expenditure generally, and had no reference to the cost of settling the strike which came towards the end of the year, and another application had been made for a further increase to meet the extra wages bill. Opposition had been encountered from the nitrate industry, but he hoped the railway's clients would see that they could not expect a first-class

service without paying tariffs to cover expenditure and give a reasonable return on capital. That they had not been charging their customers unduly high tariffs was evidenced by the fact that they had not been called on to pay excess profits duty. As to the current year, they had an increase of gross receipts compared with last year of £558,515, and of £62,280 compared with 1918. He was afraid, however, that the rate of working expenses would not be much reduced. Still, he would be extremely disappointed if, when they met this time next year, there was not a very much better showing to put before the meeting. In conclusion, the Chairman dealt with the problem of through railway connection between the North-West Province of the Argentine and the northern part of Chili. People in the province of Antofagasta were again agitating for this to be done, but his feeling now was that railway construction for some time to come must be largely a matter for Government.

Sir Robert Harvey seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

A resolution increasing the directors' fees from £4,500 to £7,000 per annum was unanimously agreed to, and the resolutions at the extraordinary meeting of the 8th ult. were unanimously confirmed.

CHANNEL TUNNEL COMPANY

THE ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the Channel Tunnel Co., Ltd., was held at the Cannon Street Hotel, E.C., on 25th ult., Baron Emile B. d'Erlanger, the Chairman, presiding.

The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, said he could now deal with perfect freedom with certain political questions closely connected with the Channel Tunnel. When this country joined the war in 1914 its motive was a desire to go to the rescue of the weak and oppressed, and that was at the time generally recognised in France; but as the struggle developed into one of life and death equally for the British nation as for our Allies, and the French nation recognised this fact, their feeling of gratitude naturally faded gradually away, and it was only partly understood in France, which was a military and not a naval nation, that notwithstanding the heroism and enormous sacrifices made by all the armies in the field, the real basis and foundation of the great resistance which ultimately led the Allied nations to victory was the British Navy. It was true that that was recognised in certain parts of France, such as Boulogne and the coastal regions of Boulogne, but it was only natural in such circumstances that questions of interest should reassert themselves, and that divergences of opinion on questions of vital importance to France and England should at times create a certain amount of feeling. He believed, however, that this country was entirely Francophile, that there was a solidarity of opinion in favour of France, and that nationally and individually the feelings of friendship towards France were stronger than ever before. If the Entente Cordiale was to be reciprocal, and the mutual feelings of the two nations towards one another were to be as vivid and as strong as during the war, he felt that the position could not be allowed to rest entirely upon questions of material interest, but rather upon the feelings of the two nations as a whole. Entire confidence had to be established between the two nations, and he felt that the best proof of confidence we could give the French nation was to say we would build the Channel Tunnel.

Lord Sydenham seconded the resolution, remarking that he believed that a complete understanding with France was a most essential condition to the peace of Europe in the future, and that the best means of preventing misunderstanding and of obtaining the complete confidence of the great French nation would be the construction of the Channel Tunnel as soon as possible. The motion was carried unanimously.

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MALACCA RUBBER PLANTATIONS

Mr. George B. Dodwell presided at the meeting of the above company held on the 29th ult., and in moving the adoption of the report said that the results of the year were evidenced by the dividend which they thought it prudent to recommend and no useful purpose would be served by a comparison of crop costs or profits with the year 1918. It was, however, interesting to note that their Debenture indebtedness was now within measurable distance of £200,000. At the end of the year it was £213,070, and redemptions effected since had further reduced it to a sum of £201,260, at which it stood at the moment. The output for the year considerably exceeded the estimate, and it would seem that their current year's estimate of 4,500,000 lb., was a reasonably conservative one as they had harvested 1,577,382 lb. to the end of May, and had the most fruitful months of the year before them. Certain minor, and they believed beneficial, alterations had taken place in the company's planted area. They had disposed on very favourable terms of an outlying block of rubber which it was found very difficult to control and administer, because of its remoteness from the estate to which it was nominally attached, but they had since purchased land which was conveniently situated between the Umbei and Serkam Estates, and the planted area remained approximately the same as when he last addressed them. Turning to the position in Malacca, he said it was, as they would expect, considerably easier than it was a year ago. The European staff was almost up to strength again, and the problem of adequate supervision, which proved an increasingly troublesome one during the war, was now ceasing to cause anxiety. The shortage of rice and the question of the Indian exchange had, as all knew, given them considerable anxiety, but the recent and rapid fall in the price of silver had afforded the employers of Indian labour in the Malay Peninsula appreciable relief. One could wish that the problem presented by the shortage of rice was as susceptible to treatment by the Government, as that of the rupee exchange, but better crops alone would help them, and those it was, as he thought the most enthusiastic politician would admit, beyond the province or capacity of Government to provide.

The report was adopted.

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INSURANCE

During the past few days two companies have celebrated their bi-centenaries, the Royal Exchange Assurance and the London Assurance, and not a little has been written which at any rate serves to show something of the romance of building up such a magnificent business as both these corporations to-day possess. The Royal Exchange claims to be the older by a few minutes, but both offices have and have always had so much in common, that it is quite a happy idea to refer to them as twins. Both were formed in the hectic days of the South Sea Bubble, and the path of neither was made any easier by the subsequent inevitable slump, but fortunately they survived to represent in the year 1920 all that is best in traditional methods of English commerce and in modern enterprise. Many other companies have been founded in the last seventy or eighty years, which have rapidly gone to the front, but nothing in their success has diminished the regard in which these two veteran offices are held. The reason of that is to some extent that both offices have discovered the secret of perpetual youth, and so far from being content with something attempted and something done over such a long period, both offices are not a bit behind their most energetic rivals in seeking new business where it may be found. The record of the last few years, which have been such a busy time for insurance companies, shows that both the Royal Exchange and the London Assurance have had their due share of the general prosperity. New companies come and new companies—one will not say go—but at any rate succumb to the temptations held out by the great absorbing companies, but through all the changing scene the Royal Exchange and the London Assurance continue. The only regret one may feel is that the early pioneers may not know how much better they builded than they could possibly then have realised.

The London Assurance was "erected" in the reign of George I., and externally on the 22nd June, 1720. It was known familiarly as "Chetwynd's Bubble," after its chief founder, and the title links it with that period of bubbles, known as the South Sea. Fortunately, however, the London Assurance has proved to be no bubble. At first it was formed for the purpose of marine insurance, but within a year it added life and fire to its activities. In its first year marine premiums produced £9,740, fire premiums £570, and life premiums £170—not a very large sum on which to build up a life fund, but bearing in mind the value of money two centuries ago and the novelty of insurance, this was more than a modest beginning of the great things which have followed. That the Corporation soon began to think imperially is evidenced by the record of business in Gibraltar in 1752 and of fire insurance in Philadelphia in 1760. Some of the picturesqueness of the period is maintained in the difficulty recorded of doing burglary business owing to the activity of highwaymen and their fondness for other people's jewellery. The title of the Corporation was a happy inspiration and the record of the Company's business is most intimately bound up with the life and history of the City, and not only is the company known all over the world, but London assurance is the recognised high-water mark for stability and integrity.

If great events have small beginnings, so do insurance companies, and in these days, which are seeing a plethora of new companies on an unprecedented scale, it is well to study the past of some of the companies which to-day lead the field. The Royal Exchange Assurance was born in the same hour of financial madness which produced the London Assurance, and its early days were not on the magnificent scale of its present day operations, although it appears to have been formed on a sound financial basis and at the end of its first year it had a surplus of £14,000. In its very first year it absorbed another company which had not been able to obtain a charter, and that must be probably the first instance of a policy which has become common form in the last few generations.

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THE CITY

Henley and a so-called Bank Holiday have been extensively blamed for the continued restriction of business in the Stock Exchange during the past week. These, however, while they undoubtedly have some effect, are excuses rather than causes. Dealing is restricted for the reason that the future is obscure and threatening, and will remain obscure and threatening until the details of the Finance Bill are finally settled. Seeing that finance and industry are in a condition approaching paralysis consequent upon the slow passage of this Bill, its progress would doubtless be stimulated by the Government, but for the quandary in which the Government finds itself. First one financial authority and then another flagellate the Government's announced intentions, which seem to be to continue wasteful expenditure and to provide for it by taxing industry and enterprise out of existence.

Now that the Victory Bond drawing is out of the way, having caused much less excitement than many anticipated, interest in gilt-edged stocks has displayed a tendency to slacken. Nor is this deriving much benefit from the release of dividends, consequent upon the turn of the month and half-year. A certain amount will doubtless come forward ultimately for re-investment, but the fact that the bulk of it will do so by way of the various holiday resorts, will delay such influence as it may exert. Then it must be remembered that a large amount of Government stock is still pledged with bankers, who will see to it that the dividends are applied to the reduction of loans. Colonial borrowings are a further adverse influence here, in which connection it is believed that the example of New South Wales in offering 6½ per cent. may be extensively followed, though the fact that underwriters are saddled with 55% of the New South Wales issue may act in some measure as a deterrent. Allowing for redemption, some of the older Colonial loans give very large yields indeed. For instance, South Australia 5 per cents. (1921-1923) yield at the present price £7 19s. per cent., New South Wales 4½ per cent. bonds (1922-1927), £8 2s. per cent., and Queensland 4½ per cent. bonds, which are not everybody's choice, as much as £8 12s. 6d. per cent.

The secret of the scheme of the Ministry of Transport for the future working of the railways was well kept, and it is something that an effort has at last been made to solve this thorny problem. To what extent the scheme will be carried into effect remains to be seen. Already opposition is rampant, notably in the Lobby, where the grouping idea in particular is ridiculed. Nor is the representation of employees on the Boards of Management regarded with unmixed favour. Why not, it is asked, give representation to the passenger, who furnishes so large a proportion of the companies' receipts? No doubt, all these matters will be duly threshed out in detail. Meantime, there is opportunity for constructive as well as destructive criticism.

Among purely investment securities a quiet demand has been in evidence of late for bank shares. This is no doubt attributable to the beginning of the half-yearly dividend announcements, concerning which optimistic views are entertained. Provision for the depreciation of investments must, of course, be made in many instances, consequent upon the slump earlier in the year, but against this the banks have undoubtedly experienced a particularly prosperous time in other directions. There is accordingly little ground for anticipating reduced dividends or, for that matter, less prosperous conditions during the remaining half of the year. In some quarters, indeed, higher distributions are being predicted, though this can be little better than guess work. The first banking dividend to be declared was that of the Commercial Bank of London, which institution comes nearer than any other to the conception of a bank to finance industry in the true sense of the phrase. But the dividend is obviously a mere interim to mark time; a formal 5 per cent. rate for the period ended June 30th, giving no indication as to what the profits really are, and what rate may be distributed on the full year's working.

Business in home industrial securities is particularly affected by the uncertainty and threat of Government's handling of finance, especially its Excess Profits Duty proposals. It is driving the public from sound industrial shares to mere speculative counters. Russian bonds and Russian oil and mining shares provide a case in point; business in these is expanding. It is sincerely to be hoped that the movement will gain no great headway, for it would be hard to find a more dangerous field for speculation. The fall of Trotsky, or his assumption of a dictatorship—both events are being predicted—might conceivably be equally calamitous where foreign capital is concerned. At the moment Russia is in the melting-pot, and there the wise investor will be content to leave her for the present.

The Mexican situation is not a parallel; in fact, it is one of considerable promise, with the unfortunate qualification that no one can see very far ahead. The provisional president of the Republic has started well—it might almost be said too well, for there is something rather uncanny in the reports as to the celerity with which wrongs are being righted. In the past the words Mexico and Utopia have hardly been synonymous, consequently one instinctively scrutinises both fence and ointment with apprehension, although so far neither nigger nor fly has become apparent. It remains to be hoped that De la Huerta's successor next year may share his apparent appreciation of honour—not to say, commonsense. The natural wealth of the country is practically boundless, and given a president who can induce the inhabitants to behave like ordinary law-abiding creatures, it will have a most prosperous future. Some considerable period must yet elapse, however, before lasting stability can be with confidence relied upon.

After a trifling set-back earlier in the week, for which profit-taking sales were in the main responsible, prices in the Oil share market are again tending upwards, and there is little question that public interest in this section steadily expands. This is hardly surprising in view of the progress such concerns as the Shell and Burmah and the Mexican Eagle are able to report, and as long as investors confine their attention to powerful and enterprising undertakings of this sort, they can be assured at least of a run for their money. Some disappointment was expressed that the second interim dividend of the Mexican Eagle, making 11 per cent. to date, was not at a higher rate, but the output of the company for the first four months of the current year, over 5½ million barrels, substantially exceeds that for the corresponding period of 1919, and though it is not yet possible to predict what the final dividend for 1919-20 will be, the consistent firmness of the market in the shares is itself of good augury.

It will be remembered that a short time ago the Russo-Asiatic Company acquired an option over a mining proposition in France. A somewhat similar decision has been taken by the Baku Consolidated Oil-fields, which now announces that it has stopped the remittance of funds and the shipping of machinery to Russia, and has acquired a joint interest in a Californian oil proposition. This step, it appears, was taken some three months ago, and development work which was begun straight away is giving very encouraging results, while on other properties in the immediate vicinity no fewer than seven wells have since been "brought in." A company is in course of formation, under the laws of Texas, with an authorised capital of 5,000,000 dollars for the purpose of developing and working this new acquisition.

The value of co-ordination of effort, talent and facilities as an offset against the increasing demands of labour and the cost of raw materials is strikingly exemplified by the accounts for last year, just issued, of the great Explosive combination—Explosives Trades, Limited. The amalgamation includes Nobels, Kynochs, and some thirty other businesses of the kind; and it has an issued capital of just under fifteen millions sterling. The actual amount earned since the com-

pany's inception (in November, 1918), is not disclosed, as the receipts include dividends received from the constituent companies for 1918 in addition to those payable for 1919. The total net profit, however, amounts to the very respectable sum of £1,655,200, out of which the ordinary shares have already received a dividend of 9 per cent. for 1918, while for 1919 distributions of 10 per cent. on the Ordinary, and 5 per cent. on the Deferred are now proposed. In addition, the whole of the preliminary expenses, amounting to £127,800, are written off, and £231,500 remains to be carried forward to the new financial year. The report states that during the past year the policy originally outlined for transition from war conditions to peace industries and the extension of the company's interests into a wider range of activities have been vigorously pursued with encouraging indications for the future.

The City has learned with profound regret, that owing to ill-health Mr. Frank Dudley Docker, C.B., has found it necessary to restrict his energies, and is therefore resigning his seat on the boards of Vickers, Limited, and certain other companies with which he has long been associated. Mr. Docker proposes to act as managing-director of Docker Brothers, Limited, for a while, and will retain his seat on the boards of the London Joint City & Midland Bank, the Metropolitan Railway Company, and the British Trade Corporation. The hope will be general that he may soon be restored to his former health and able to resume his business activities to the full. His capacity makes him an important national asset.

Either by accident or design the report of the Imperial Wireless Telegraphy Committee appeared immediately before the annual meeting of the Marconi Company the other day. Consequently Senator Marconi was unable to devote to it in his speech the measure of detail demanded. Mr. Godfrey Isaacs, however, obtained a copy of the report on his way to the meeting, and had some particularly damaging remarks to make about it. The state of feeling between the Chairman of the Committee (Sir Henry Norman) and the Marconi Company can be gathered from the report of the meeting which appears in another column. From the shareholder's, as from the tax-payer's, point of view, the chief item of interest is that the Committee turns down the proposals of the Company as being too grandiose and vague, and recommends a chain of stations under another system which would cost a million and a quarter, and would result in an annual six figure loss on working during its earlier years. The Marconi Company has put forward a scheme under which it is prepared to erect on its own account and at its own cost, a complete chain of stations throughout the Empire 25 per cent. of the profits of which would accrue to the State. In the present state of the Company's finances, and having regard to the muddle made by officialdom in business matters, it will take a good deal to convince the public that the Company's scheme is not preferable to that of the Committee.



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